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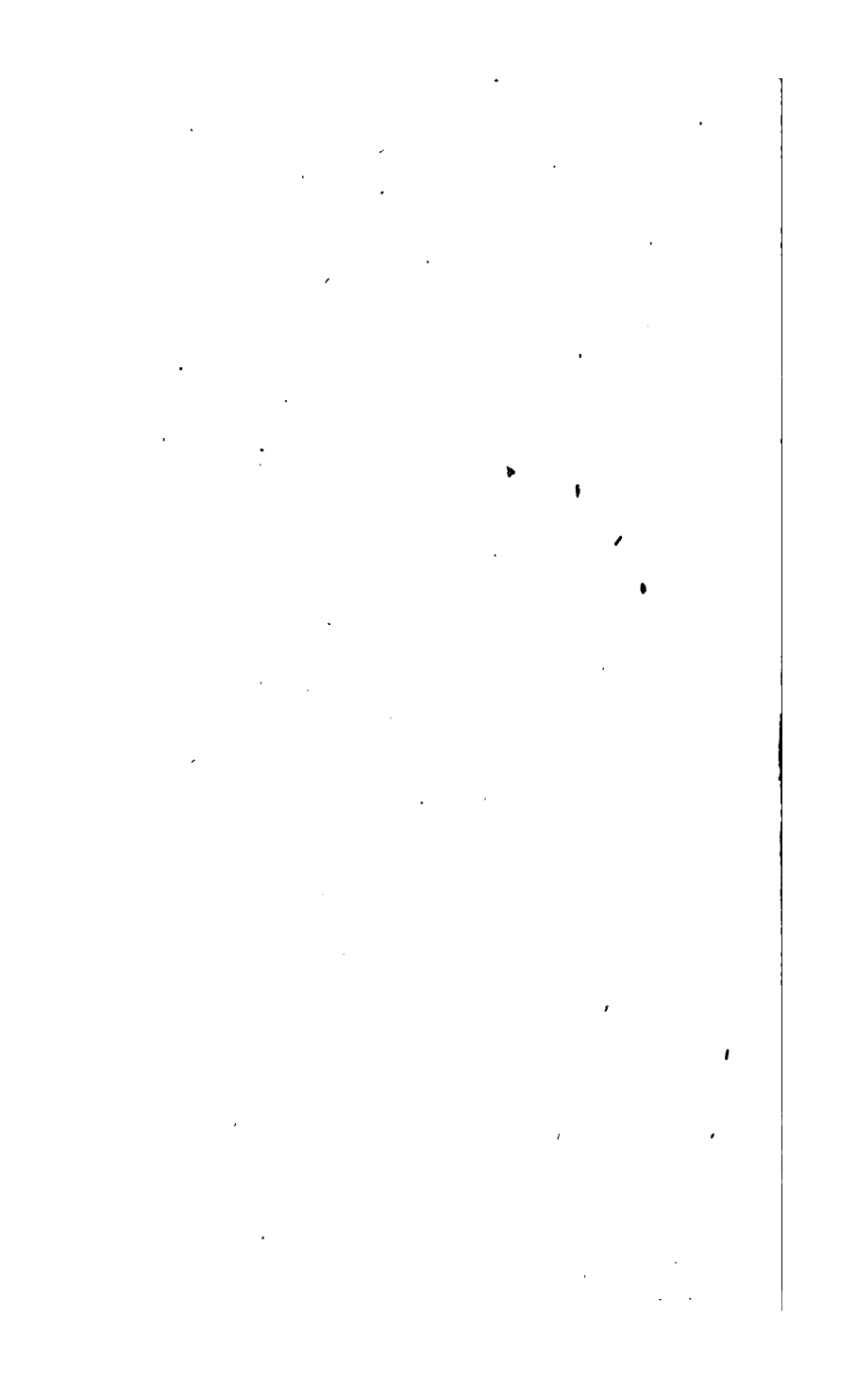






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JANET HAMILTON,

AND

OTHER TALES:

BY THE AUTHOR

"SLIGHT REMINISCENCES."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME II.

[PHILADELPHIA:  
CAREY, LEA, & BLANCHARD.

1837.

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# THE VEILED WOMAN.

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—"The lidless dragon eyes!"

*Orlando.* Believe you, then, no supernatural influence?  
Believe you not that spirits throng around us?

*Coleridge's Remorse.*

A TRAVELLER who had followed the course of a stream through the naked glens and bleak poplar valleys of Champagne until his eye had forgotten to remark their monotony, or his mind to note the lapse of time, found his progress suddenly impeded by the overflowing of a river swoln out of its customarily channel. The fields were under water from one side of the valley to the other, and the tall poplars which stood up in regular rows, like the jacks of a harpsichord, seemed to grow out of the bosom of a glassy lake, as fancy groves do upon an Indian screen.

Nothing quickens the contemplative faculties so effectually as the repose of nature. In its stillness

the mind recovers the capacity of thought, the power of concentration, enfeebled or divided by the movement or the interest of external objects, and the imagination finds again its visions, sometimes fair and welcome ones, at others with the sad shadows of memory or apprehension blackening on them.

The traveller was a melancholy man, a dark dreamer; there are scars in the heart over which the moss of time never grows, and the deep and deadly one which he bore within him festered still, though the day of its infliction had been long gone by. He was one with whom fate had dealt hardly, whose buds of happiness had fallen to the ground without blossoming; one with whom the world had made gracious engagements and broken them, deceiving him, as it will to the end of time deceive all those who lean upon its reedy promises.

The winter snows were fast dissolving, and making wild rivers of the country brooks, changing their babbling speech into rough music, and bearing down their gentle limits; but the traveller journeyed on with his recollections until the present was utterly forgotten, and he was almost walking in the waters before he perceived that the path

which he had at first followed had been long effaced. He looked round, but no track appeared; it was a pale cold country, with a bleak sun glaring on it, neither house or hut was within sight; it was evident that he had forsaken, without knowing it, the course of the stream, and had followed one of its deviating branches.

The point now was to find a way of getting out of the scrape; and after a narrow inspection, a foot path winding upwards from a hollow into which the waters had not risen to any considerable height, caught his eye. It was a deep wade to get at it, but he succeeded, and following its traces, reached after much clambering, to the top of a hill round and green, and encrusted with moss and fragrant herbs, on which numerous flocks found pasture. A child, who was their guardian, sat whistling on a stone with a huge lump of black bread spread over with a layer of soft cheese in his hand, on which the rough dog who watched beside him gazed wistfully. The boy's patois and the stranger's more cultivated dialect had hard work to understand each other; but at length the latter contrived to make out that a path leading downwards from the hill through an oak copse into a narrow glen, would, if

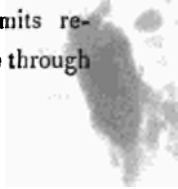
pursued without deviation, lead to a house at no great distance.

The traveller struck into the wood, and after descending for some time, came to the foot of the hill, when the path turning sharply round a projecting rock, a long and lonely valley opened before him. There was nothing unusual in its features, and yet the scene was not a common one. Two high and deeply indented ridges ran parallel with each other; they had neither the elevation of mountains nor the verdure of hills; they were rude and rocky, but where nature had offered a ledge, the industry of man had taken advantage of it to plant a few vines, which at that early season were no helps to beauty.

Between these hills lay a narrow and lonely valley, or rather stripe of land, with a clear and noiseless stream stealing through it. A shallow edging and some irregular patches of very green grass, whose freshness was led by its moisture, marked its track, and looked like artificial coloring, contrasted with the rocky soil and arid tinting of the general picture. There was no other appearance of cultivation than the few vines,—neither sheep or shepherd, hut or tree, except one ancient oak, whose lower branches had yet life in them, and still

wore their winter leaves, while the bare and sapless top spread itself out on the sky, letting in the coloring of the heavens through its naked branches.

All who have observed nature, know how beautiful is the leafless oak when the fine intricacies, the bold off-sets of its graceful ramifications, are presented to the eye with a freedom of outline and a delicacy of detail powerful enough in themselves to sustain its entire character of majesty and beauty, even when the green covering, with its points of light and depth of shadow, its living and varied richness, is dead and gone. This single tree was in itself a grand and impressive image ; and as it stood without offspring or companion alone in the still valley, it seemed to commune with heaven in that silent language which it would be presumption to translate into words. The glen was long and narrow, and the close hills threw shadows over it that appeared to deepen its depths ; there was no visible issue, and the rocky projections which appeared to shut it up, folded over each other at the base, while the summits receding gently, let in a soft and far-off distance through the gleamy opening.





The traveller still went on, but no habitation rose before him, no object seemed to fill the space between the near hills and the far perspective. Twilight was gathering over the valley, but the break in the hills looked like a window in the heavens; he was still at some distance from it, and he paused for a moment while thought thickened on him. There is something in the solitude of nature that awakens melancholy; I have just said that it quickens contemplation—it does both. As we look upon its loneliness, a feeling in accordance with the surrounding gloom creeps into the mind and spreads through it, till the rocks and streams, the trackless hills and silent valleys are forgotten in the reflections which their solemn and mysterious aspect has awakened.

He turned and looked back upon the narrow way, which half an hour before had seemed a pleasant valley; but it was all dark,—all except the stream that glided along like a thread of light, with the last gleam of day reflected on it. “It is like hope, (he said,) it out-lasts every thing; but it will fade too, even as thou didst, Azima!” He thought of the morning of his life, when the early sun shone on it; but the glory

of happiness had passed away; the red light in the west was gone; even the grey of twilight had hardened into cold, unchanging, everlasting night, —the night of the heart, that knows no second dawn!

Thus ruminating, he at length reached the issue of the defile, which proved to be a narrow path winding between the hills. He turned into it, and soon found himself in another valley, but of a different character from that through which he had already passed. Daylight still lingered on it; it was wide and wooded; a dark forest over-spread the hills on one side, while of the other the vine had long since made itself master; the clear stream had become a discolored river, and the double row of tall poplars, which it is so difficult to expunge from the landscape in France, stood up spare and erect along its banks.

An ungainly building,—old but not gothic, something between the castle of defence of the middle ages, and the modern accumulation called a *chateau*, spread out its walls at one side, occupying a spot, which for being a garden, was not the less a swamp. A long terrace extended itself in front of the house, fenced by a marble balustrade broken in many places,

and decorated at intervals with stone vases full of coarse wall-flower, or baser dandelion, chance-sown, and disputing the nurturing earth with the sweet rose or delicate azalia. At each side, framing in the building, was an alley of lime-trees closely planted and squared into solidity; below the terrace a *charmille*; beyond that a stagnant pool with a cupid astride on a dolphin in the middle of it; then flower-knots still in winter misery, mixed up with patches of flax and ragged vinestalks; then a high wall, a dry moat, a turnip-field, and last of all the river.

Behind the house was a spacious court, paved and overgrown with weeds and long grass; some huge blocks of stone lay about, and the repairs for which they were originally intended having been long forgotten, had bedded themselves into the earth, from which the stately thistle sprang up in barren luxuriance. Three sides of the court were surrounded by buildings, and across the fourth was extended a wide front of iron railing, with a gate in the centre as high again as the railing, and superbly flourished over, with the family eagle—beak and claws gilt—on the top of it. Outside this lordly barrier was the dependent hamlet, and its modest though

not unfeatured church ; and nearer still, the free ground of every thing that chose to put itself there, —ruts, puddle, straw, fierce dog, squalling children, and all the pell-mell of careless husbandry. The rest, up to the summit of the hill under which the castle stood, and far beyond it, was forest,—forest to the right and to the left, and every where except in front of the building, where a range of hills covered with short vine-plants, spread out their raw monotony.

The traveller found himself at fault. Here was evidently the spot to which the shepherd-boy had directed him, but there was no house of refuge, no creaking sign or hanging bush, or explanatory vine spreading its painted tendrils over a fierce red wall. Nothing in short of hospitable aspect, or even of decent seeming, except the castle itself, and there he dared not knock.

However, roofs were in view, and he was too well used to a rough bivouac to have retained much daintiness ; so he approached a cottage, the door of which stood open. Within the porch sat an old man, who looked as if death had forgotten him ; his features spoke of time like an Egyptian hieroglyphic, to which the clue had long been lost ; and on

the ground was an infant playing with his feet as if they had been those of a statue. A young woman poured broth into a bowl, and kneeling on a stool before him, cooled it with her breath as she offered it to him affectionately. It might be thought that the picture,—being one of common and kindly nature, would have rather touched than offended; but the stranger gazed on it for a moment, and then shrinking back from the threshold, passed on.

Another cottage was near, a rude hovel; he advanced towards it and knocked. As he did so, a man of middle age and in the garb of a peasant, but with the air of better days, came towards him. He carried a gun on his shoulder, and was followed by a leash of dogs of a picked breed. Approaching the stranger, he greeted him cordially, saying, "You have fallen upon rough quarters, sir, and are too far from town or village to find such as might suit one of your appearance before nightfall."

"I begin to be aware of that, my friend," interrupted the stranger, "and mean to ask of these good people a seat by their fire till daybreak."

"Meagre work, sir," replied the peasant, "to hear green wood hiss and be served with unseasoned salad,

when a man is cold and hungry ; but if you will come with me, I think I can promise you better fare at the old house yonder."

The traveller accepted the offer thankfully. It is, probably, (thought he, as he scanned his new acquaintance,) an ancient domestic, gardener, or gamekeeper,—perhaps all in one, as sometimes happens in old-fashioned country establishments. But it was not a moment to be nice: the air was sharpening into bitterness; and hateful to the stranger's fancy as were the gross orgies of the buttery, to which his inviter was probably leading him, yet the offer promised not only shelter, but what was infinitely more seducing to his mind,—excitement.

His soul was like that instrument from which the winds as they sweep across its chords, draw only sounds of melancholy,—deep and full, or wild and tremulous, but always sad. There is no note of joy in the whole diapason, none that responds to the warm caresses of the sunny south as it lingers on it. When the storm comes, the creaking strings reply moaningly to the blast that passes over them; their sounds echo the dying breath of

evening, and still when the blythe morning air plays on their surface, the same plaintive symphony answers its gay appeal.

In the blank walls and dilapidated out-buildings, turrets and parapets, where the owl hooted and the grass waved,—even in the more modern part, where the glaring windows looked out upon the neglected terrace, there was much in the spacious building before him to feed the waywardness of fancy. Its walls, discolored by the double agency of time and atmosphere, were records of the past, and with the past alone did his soul sympathize; the present was for him what the fairy-tale that amused the child is for one of riper years,—it had lost its charm, for he no longer believed in it. He had been in the hollow cell behind the altar, had seen the naked necromancy of the oracle, and for him there was no more illusion; but he was pleased, as far as to be pleased, was in his nature, to pass the night in a spot whose old associations tallied with the workings of his fancy.

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A gap in the wall with a slight door in it, awkwardly hinging and yielding stubbornly to the hand with a scrape that described a wide semicircle in the clod every time it was pushed open, had, from being used as a temporary issue while the great gate was repairing, become the established entrance to the castle. The traveller followed his guide through this aperture, glided by the kennel, the stable, the dovecote ; then through a low corridor, two or three untenanted chambers whose boards creaked portentuously, and as many slips and angles such as our ladies of a hundred years ago loved to decorate with long-necked jars and diminutive tea-pots, calling them china-closets, but whose floors served as preserves for winter apples ; while grapes, gradually shrinking into raisins, dangled in chilly festoons from the peeled walls.

At length, a narrow stair-case dark and winding presented itself ; at the top was a door, which the peasant—taking a key from his pocket—opened, and led the way into a lofty and spacious chamber, gravely and somewhat sparingly furnished, and on whose darkly panelled walls hung numerous heavy gilt frames elaborately wrought ; some inclosing dusty and time-stained mirrors, others an ancient



portrait, a faded flower-piece, dead game, or a boar-hunt. The rest of the furniture was of the same age and fashion,—a bed like the third Richard's war couch, marble consoles supported on carved brackets, panels and floors of oak black with age, and the heavy andiron—for the tongs had no partner—reposing within the capacious chimney.

An old print of Madame de Montespan as Venus, surrounded by an atmosphere of loves, and one of Madame de Grignan after an enamel of Petitot's, rested on the lofty chimney-piece as if they had been novelties just unpacked, and not yet handed over to the gilt nail. But of all modern luxuries there was a total dearth ; no round table, or square table, or book table, easy chair or footstool, soft rug or psyche ; no moveable toilette rolling forward at a touch, and shedding the light of its illuminated branches on the large pure mirror ; nothing in short to flatter indolence, or administer to vanity.

Such as it was, the proud dimensions of this chamber still bestowed an air of dignity on its faded ornaments. The traveller swept it over with a hasty glance, and then looking down on

his own shabby and soaked attire, smiled significantly.

"What does it matter?" said his guide, as if replying to an observation. "My garb must have told you that I am no exacter of toilette etiquette."

"I am no exacter!" repeated the traveller mentally, while he considered for a moment the figure before him.

It was tall and spare, the eye quick and penetrating, the smile frank, the accent educated; a careless stoop of the shoulders, and a pleasant gibe of the lip, counteracted the effect of a naturally aristocratical bearing, which was further softened down by a peculiar friendliness of tone and manner. Old habits and odd ones, had thickened the cambrick thread without making yarn of it; but the traveller's glance had not dived beneath the drugget: he had been looking one way and his thoughts another, and the difference between a coarse man and a coarse garb had escaped his observation.

The supposed peasant was evidently the master of the house, and the stranger, while his host struck a flint against his gun-lock and lighted a candle at the sparks, would have apologized; but

the lord of the castle, who was much more amused than offended, good-humoredly set him right with himself.

"I have been," said he, "a courtier in my day, a traveller too, and a soldier; but I have long thrown it all off,—trappings, staff, and arms, and have taken, with altered fortunes but an unbroken stock of cheerfulness, to the forests where my ancestors hunted the wolf with fine-mouthed dogs, trained by musical speech and cadenced voices. Ah, in those good times, even Maine and Anjou might have envied the woodland symphonies, the sonorous breathings of the early horns to which these old hills echoed, and Burgunday the grape whose juice sparkled in the deep wine-cups when our forefathers pledged each other joyously, ready for amity or strife as events turned, gallant warriors, bold hunters, or 'preux chevaliers' according to circumstances; while I their unworthy descendant sow corn in the hunter's track, plant vines in the field of tournaments, send my grain to market, turn my grapes to base account,—in short make farming my employment, and the chase my recreation. My peasants are attached to my garb; a tree of liberty, a chapter on equality would be less effective: my

clod shoes and coarse garments pass for virtues ; according to their mode of spelling signs, there is both heart and soul in them. Here, I am 'le bon pere ;' in the world, the Count de Mortemain ; but I visit it seldom now. I once lived much in society, and thought I could not live out of it, but use does wonders."

"With the outward man every thing," observed the stranger.

"And with the inward one too," returned the count, "at least in most cases. For myself, I came to my solitude unwillingly ; but I would not quit it now for a field-marshal's staff, or the portfolio of a prime-minister. Some of my family, however, are not exactly of my opinion. When you have reposed a little, I shall have the pleasure of presenting you to my wife and sister ; in half an hour we shall sup." And then with a few words of courtesy, he left his guest to turn to the best account he could, the scanty wardrobe contained

in his lig

This [redacted] teller looked round and, taking a [redacted] gloomy chamber, thought within his [redacted] could best contrive to remain alone in [redacted] usings,—the sole society

congenial to his blighted heart. There was still a little daylight in the sky, though not enough to penetrate lower than the hill-tops; but a faint moon was rising that somewhat helped it, and seemed to protract its stay beyond its natural hour. A side window, at which he stood musingly, opened on a projection of the forest that rose abruptly before it; and his eye—ever in search of sombre objects, was at once arrested by the dark rocks and darker trees that waved moaningly over them.

He had once loved softer scenes,—soft happy vales, and meadows with the flowers of Enna brightening on them; but now the gay gorgeousness of nature darkened his mind, his soul was alarmed by its calm splendor; the warbling of birds no longer chimed with the rough gratings of memory, nor the sunny heavens with the rebellious spirit that shunned its light. He sought those scenes which seemed to offer to guilt first temptation, and then shelter,—the lone forest, the caverned shore, the incarcerating mountains, the deep abyss,—those natural prisons that close in upon the mind as the screw-doors of the Venetian prisons do upon the body, jamming in, and discolouring, and at last extinguishing all that

gives tone to the spirit and freshness to the feelings. Light, life, expansion, were hateful to him, because all within was darkness and the shadow of death. Yet he was not a bad, but an injured man,—one most basely cheated, and goaded into reprisal until wrath had become vengeance, and vengeance crime.

If a grand and passionate nature be wisely nurtured, the glory of high deeds, of honor, of genius, encircles it, the blessing of love is on it; it runs its course like a giant, and the applause of man goes with it. Place the same sensitively organized and powerfully endowed mind in circumstances unfavourable to its expansion, wrest from it by education or otherwise the two grand props—belief in God's justice and in man's truth, turn it loose amongst evil things, and its passions will become error or gloom, or both; or perhaps worse, wickedness,—insurrection against all that wears the shape of virtue or of holiness.

The stranger—but it matters not. His story—it is a wild and dreary one—has nothing to do with my narrative. Every page of the curious and eventful book of human life has its tale of misused genius, of subverted principle, of error

even while the sense of virtue still exists, of weakness even while strength is yet instinct.

The hoarse growling of the wind in the trees, the monotonous sway of their bleak branches, the coming night, the darkness of his chamber, were all fast ministering to his wild fancies, when suddenly a low sound struck upon his ear ; it seemed to proceed from a door which he had not before observed, and which was evidently not used as an entrance, for the bolts had rusted in their sockets.

He drew them back by main strength, and found that it opened on one of those spacious galleries, from which in old-fashioned houses the staircase usually descends ; it was vast, lofty, and arched above. The door which the stranger had just discovered was at one extremity, and at the other were two parallel staircases, one at each side, leaving a wide space fenced with a marble balustrade between them, and thus terminating the gallery. Below, these staircases united in one broad flight, and received light from a gothic window of large dimensions in front of the door.

In the centre of the gallery, and exactly opposite to the door, was an equestrian statue of a knight armed from top to toe, the vizor up and a face

peering from under it, to which the preposterous taste of a barbarous age had given coloring. The eyeballs glared sternly, with that false horrid look of life which tells that no life is there ; the right arm was extended, the face blank, the posture menacing. Hangings of tapestry, darkly storied, covered the walls ; and the dust that lay upon them, as well as other symptoms of neglect, showed that the part of the castle to which the double staircase led, was uninhabited ; and yet from its size and air of feudal grandeur, it probably contained the principal apartments.

There did not appear to be any thing more either to excite or gratify curiosity, and the traveller returned to his chamber. He had scarcely time to close the door when his host appeared, and by his kind and cordial manner checked the excuse which hung upon the lip of his guest. They descended together to the family saloon, and the new inmate was presented to the members of the domestic circle.

Supper passed off agreeably. The Count de Mortemain, who had changed his garb for one somewhat more suited to his station, though still of antique cut and unassuming material, did the



honors of his house with infinite urbanity ; his simple and peculiar manner rather set off than weakened the effect of his fine sense and high breeding, and gave a pungency to the tone of indulgent philosophy which ran through his conversation. The table was excellent, and abundantly served, —country meats seasoned with town skill, and wines of home growth but rare perfection. Old-fashioned servants in old-fashioned liveries waited on the guests, and seemed authorized to smile at the happy hit, or careless pleasantry ; it was a true family banquet, cordially and courteously presided, and cheerfully enjoyed. At length the visitors (three gentlemen of the neighborhood) took their leave, and the traveller, who was considered for that night as one of the family, alone remained. Suddenly the bell at the outward gate was rung. "Strange !" exclaimed Madame de Mortemain, turning pale, "this is the third night that some one, who never waits to be answered, has rung that bell."

"Third and last," said the count cheerfully. "To-morrow I shall set a watch to seize and intercept the delinquent, whoever he may be ; and if he does not pay smartly for his frolic—"

"Frolic!" interrupted a voice, tremulous with terror, "do you mean to call this a frolic?"

"Most assuredly,—a mischievous one I grant you, but still nothing more."

"There I differ from you wholly," returned the voice, now elevated almost to the pitch of anger. "But you do not think so; it is a mere excuse for detaining us in this horrible house, which we have every reason to believe is shared with other, and awful inhabitants."

"And yet," replied the count mildly, "we look cheerful too: our fire burns briskly, our lamps are bright, our table surrounded by happy faces—"

"But without!" interrupted the previous speaker; "who is it that rings without?"

"My dear sister," said Madame de Mortemain in a sweet caressing tone, "you must not alarm yourself thus. We are not workers of evil, for whose discovery or punishment a visit from the other world might be supposed to be permitted; and we cannot believe that the dead rise from their graves to ring at our gates and frighten our children."

"I for one am not afraid," cried a young voice in a loud key, with a tremor at the end of it.

"Nor I either," said another in a stouter tone.

"Nor I," enchoed a third boldly. "I only wish that you would let me out, and I should soon bring you word whether the ghost wears a plain frill, or double ruffles."

"To-morrow evening," returned the count with a smile; "we will anticipate our nightly visitor; and when we have caught him, your aunt shall decide upon his punishment."

"At Paris if you will," replied the lady. Then added with warmth, "My dear brother, let us go; we are wretched here,—I am at least. Nothing can ever make me think that a human hand rings that bell."

"Go to bed, my children," said the count. They received the embraces of their parents and retired.

"Now that they are gone," he continued, turning to the traveller, and without appearing to notice his sister's remark, "I must explain to you, sir, who may perhaps think the conversation which you have just heard somewhat singular, that this castle of ours enjoys the reputation of being haunted. My wife and myself being (he added good-humoredly) what are called philosophers,

have not the gift of ghost seeing ; and feeling attached to our forests and our antique abode, and very sincerely believing that we with our family are the only tenants of—”

“What, my brother!” exclaimed Madame de Verzac, “have you forgotten the great staircase? I would as lieve lodge in a charnel-house, as suffer what I have done for the last three nights.”

“Nor shall you suffer it longer,” said her brother affectionately. “Should my meditated experiment fail, I promise that the night after the next you shall sleep at Paris. For the present, I will place you in your sister’s chamber with a guard of honor, and I myself will keep watch in the hall beneath ; for, to speak truth, I begin to suspect that if this be not, as I have said, an idle frolic, it may have some design in it more substantially mischievous than the cabals of spirits.”

“O, if it were only flesh and blood, I should be as brave as you are ; but believe me, it is a more awful visitor even than the howling wolf or the nightly robber. Sir, (addressing the stranger,) it was no later than last night, that two voices whispered together outside my chamber-window, and

that window forty feet from the ground ; and while they talked, a woman laughed from a corner of the room, where there was neither visible being nor possibility of concealment. Is it not dreadful that such things should be, and any living soul be forced to suffer the misery of their neighborhood ? My women will not go to bed ; they pass the night by the fire in my chamber, having first blocked up the door with a heavy chest, to which they turn their backs lest they should see a spectre rising from it. I have banished mirrors, the shadows that passed over them were so frightful. I have sent away a screen, because something shocking,—an arm—a hand, once raised itself above it.”

“ What a horrible state of mind ! ” said the stranger gravely.

“ Horrible indeed ! ” returned the count, “ and more so even than you can imagine. Think of the terrors over which daylight has no power. If a hawker of country wares stops at my gate, my sister bolts her door and cries out from her window, ‘ For the love of heaven, send him away ! do not let him enter ! who knows what he may be ? ’ Yesterday a pedler from Alsace opened his pack

to tempt the servant-girls. Had it been Mesmer himself—”

“O, do not speak of him!” cried Madame de Verzac; “ill-luck attends the mention of his name. You have no doubt heard of him, sir?”

“I have heard him named,” replied the stranger, “but I think he was before my time.”

“And will be after,” said she hastily. “He is of all times.”

“You speak, no doubt, of that Mesmer who lived long amongst the people of the East, and learned their secrets; of him who, it was said, conversed with the dead; who dwelt with the cormorant and the bittern, and made his habitation with the screech-owl and the dragon. I have heard of him in the Levant, where the belief went that he was the Wandering Jew, at Venice they held him to be one and the same as that Signor Gualdi, the renowned magician, or more probably alchymist, of whose story they have strange records. But these are idle dreams. Mesmer is,—that is I should deem him to have been,—nothing more than an unhappy man whom despair, and travel, and some knowledge of the occult sciences had

rendered mystical ; a man wrenched out of society by unlawful violence,—crushed, trampled on, and driven by oppression to share the den of the outlaw, and forget the heart's charities in the unnatural solitude, or more unnatural companionship, into which he had been forced by the despotism of injustice."

"An elevated Cagliostro," said the count, "but with this difference,—that the one was an impostor, the other probably under the influence of mental delusion."

The traveller was silent. A long pause ensued, when turning abruptly towards the count, he said, "May I inquire how long this castle has labored under its evil reputation?"

"Not more than twelve months. About so long ago, my eldest son, who had just entered the army and was in garrison at Strasbourg, stumbled on a book of demonology, belonging to a student who dabbled in profane knowledge. Being of a deeply imaginative character, all that has a coloring of mystery takes strong hold of his mind ; and among many tales of darkness, one—owing to local circumstances—so fastened itself upon it, that he was tempted to transcribe it from the book for the purpose of

sending it to me ;—an unlucky communication, for since that hour, my house has been set down as the scene of the ghostly legend.”

The traveller expressed a strong desire to be permitted to see the manuscript ; to which the count assenting, Madame de Verzac rang for her women, who instantly made their appearance, each bearing a thick wax candle, lighted and accompanied by Madame de Mortemain, quitted the room.

None now remained of the social circle but the traveller and his host, who having piled fresh wood upon the fire drew closer to it, and opening the manuscript read as follows :—

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“ There still exists in the province of Champagne, in France a castle of great antiquity, though modern fashions have partly changed its aspect, and which in the olden time of civil wars, had been the scene of many strange events and deadly tragedies. Particular circumstances had estranged its owners from their native land, and its only inhabi-



tants at the period of which the story now about to be related treats, were a farmer and his family, who looked after the lands and occupied a corner of the castle.

"It might be about thirty years ago, that, things being as now described, a person of singular appearance came late one evening to the castle gate, and rang the bell. The farmer himself opened it, and admitted the stranger, who was on foot and alone ; and he having entered the house, and finding it to his liking, proposed to the willing husbandman that he should lodge him for a few nights, and counting down an exaggerated recompense, shortly after retired—as it seemed—to rest.

"The chamber which the unknown visitor had chosen, was a spacious one, opening on a gallery that communicated with the rest of the house by a staircase leading to the lower apartments. Near to the foot of this staircase was a door, and when that door was barred, it seemed to cut off all intercourse with any other part of the building. So thought the stranger, who having carefully examined the bolts, fastened them with caution,

and securing the door of his chamber, believed himself safe from human intrusion. But he had overlooked a narrow issue which led from an obscure corner of the gallery to a back stairs terminating in a sort of passage, that conducted to a remote apartment occupied by some part of the farmer's family.

"In this family there lived as servant a young woman, who had been always remarkable, even in her childhood when, like another Genevieve, she watched her master's sheep upon the hills, for her dark and daring spirit, her simple yet inquiring credulity, and serious faith in all that was wild and marvellous. In time of peril and dissension, she might, like Joan of Arc, have believed herself ordained to fight or prophesy ; but as it was, she was such as humble circumstances and want of knowledge had made her,—bold, curious, visionary, with a memory that teemed with tales of fiends, and ghosts, necromancers, and a firm belief in all.

"She had spelt the countenance and listened to the speech of the unknown man long and attentively, and while so doing became suddenly struck with the thought that he was, if not himself a soul

spirit, at least one of those dark men to whom—having paid the deadly price—all unholy things are familiar. Thus thinking, her curiosity became so strongly excited, that she resolved to gratify it at all risks; and when the stranger considered himself as shut out from the neighborhood of eye or ear, she had ascended the narrow staircase, and stood at the door of his chamber with her face glued, as it were, to the panel.

“Two voices spoke within: she held her breath. They talked together in an unknown tongue; one was the voice of a woman, a strange voice with a mocking laugh in it. She looked through the keyhole; a figure in a nun’s veil stood near a table; she saw the hand raised up and the wide sleeve fall back from it, but nothing more, for at that moment a rush to the door showed that she was discovered.

“She fled,—steps followed rapidly; the tramp of a horse, the pawing of hoofs were heard. She gained the narrow staircase, the door at its head closed after her; the key was on her side, so that it could not be opened from the corridor. She stopped to take breath; it was for an instant, but

in that instant the stranger had descended the great staircase, unbarred the door which separated it from the rest of the house, and was in the midst of the farmer's family when she rushed in pale and breathless, her lips dry, and her wide open eyes stony with terror. On first entering, he had looked round as if he sought for something ; yet when she appeared he did not seem to notice her, but lighting his lamp, which was the pretext for his untimely visit, quitted the chamber.

“The young woman though a bold spirit, was mastered into silence by her dread of the stranger's power, and at the time said nothing. It was true that to the eyes of others, he had not seemed to mark her entrance, but an unearthly look which he had cast on her passing, while he pressed a finger against his closed lip, had sunk into her soul, and carried terror with it ; but in the night, her courage returning, she disclosed what she had seen to a child who slept with her, first binding it down to secrecy. On the next day she fell into a stupor from which she never woke again, and the people of the house remained impressed with admiration of the stranger's humanity, who had himself administered to her (in

the absence of medical aid) various drugs, in whose properties he appeared to be entirely skilled, and kept assiduous watch by her bedside until all was over. An apothecary from a neighboring town, who arrived too late to be of use to the deceased, approved of all that had been done, complimented the stranger on his skill in medicine, and pronounced the young woman's death to have been caused by an attack of apoplexy.

"No more was said until the day when the corpse was borne into the church and placed on a bier before the high altar, in order that the usual rites might be performed previous to interment; when suddenly a rumor rose and spread itself throughout the assembly, that the deceased had come to her death by foul means.

"None knew whence it came; there were no persons present but the peasants of the village, besides the priest and servants of the church. No stranger, no gossips prone to idle surmising, with whom it might have seemed possible for the report to have originated; yet there it was, and one whispered it to another, and murmurs arose, and voices swelled it into certainty. A tumultuous crowd removed the

body from the church ; it was opened, and proofs of poison were found within it.

“Then sprang up another rumor, and in the same mysterious way, spreading itself without voice. Some said the corpse itself had spoken, others had heard the sound but knew not how it had come to them, but all cried out that the stranger was the guilty one ; and the child, who had as yet said nothing, being tongue-tied by fear, now disclosed what the deceased had revealed to her. So the people forced open his chamber, and seizing on him, conveyed him to the prison of the neighboring town, where upon trial clear evidence of his guilt appearing, he was condemned to suffer death.

“While he was in prison, a woman visited him often ; and it was said that she who did so, was human only in shape, for she was there when none could tell how she entered, and when they would have questioned her, she was gone. Voices too were heard in his cell at night,—strange voices ; and yet none of this world could be there, for the bolts were strong and the jailor vigilant. When the last day came, the same woman was seen alone

in the crowd, with her nun's veil pulled over her face ; and as she passed, she was heard to say in a muffled tone, 'Is he come?' But none could tell her features through the hood which covered them ; nor could any one approach near enough to touch or speak to her, for while you heard the rustle of her garment, she was gone.

"When all was over, the body, as is usual in such cases, was left with the executioner to be thrown into the common grave of such as die by the law, when a woman in the habit of a nun appeared in the place, (it was a solitary outhouse adjoining the dwelling of the executioner,) and claimed it as that of one who was near and dear to her,—her betrothed, she said ; and on one who was near her observing that she who was the betrothed of a celestial bridegroom could have no earthly spouse, replied, 'He who says so, knows nothing ; the dead bought me at the price of life, and even the life that was in his body has not paid his debt.' The executioner, who saw the gold in her hand, found her reasoning good ; and she, having counted down the purchase-money—doubling what was asked, bade him and he who was with him begone, say-

ing that she would watch the corpse alone till night-fall, when others would come and help her to carry it away.

“ Suddenly strange noises were heard in the air, and shouts, and struggling, and voices as in mockery or anger; then softer sounds, as if of sorrow or persuasion; and last of all, a wild overflowing chorus, swelling out tremulously, and strengthening as it rose into a song of joy,—yet not perfect, but as if still wrestling for a triumph; some calling, others answering, with a conflict and thronging of voices, and a lifting up of sounds as though louder voices sang above them, while the air rang with the music of millions of bells, and they who listened heard a rush downwards as of many wings, and saw a great light in the heavens.

“ And then again there was silence, and those who were in the outhouse looked round in amazement; but the nun was gone, and the gold likewise. So they interred the body, and marking the sign of the cross upon the grave-stone, returned marvelling to their homes, and told their children and their friends the strange things which they had witnessed.



“And as a farther testimony to the truth of this narrative, there still exists the likeness of the woman, which it may be is yet in the castle. He who painted it paid dearly for his temerity; he had seen her when she bargained with the executioner, and, as some said, at other times, and had set her down according to his recollection. But he scarcely lived to finish his work, and while he did paint upon it, his mind turned to gloom and his body wasted; none knew how he came by his death, but his corpse was found at the bottom of the Wolf’s Pool, and Christians who pass that way at night take care to say three Ave-Marias and one Pater-Noster before they approach the spot.”

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Here ended the manuscript. The traveller, who had listened with profound attention, made no comment, and the count at length broke silence by reverting to the ill effects which this legend had produced upon the mind of Madame de Verzac, and on the members of his family in general.

“My sister,” said he, “and her women, had no

sooner laid hold of it, than they decided that my good castle of Mortemain was the identical one described in the manuscript. 'Here, (they cried,) is the staircase, the vast chamber opening on it, the narrow corridor, the steed—the tramp of whose hoof was heard; in short, every proof which local evidence can possibly furnish.'

"In circumstances where the imagination works alone, and with intense power, reason has no longer any influence. My sister's brain was hissing hot, it forged shapes of fire; and my arguments, which had nothing more than common sense and the ordinary course of natural events in their favor, were pronounced trivial. She had lighted the torch, and the flame spread like wild fire; my servants revolted against the great staircase and the small, refusing to pass by either even in the day time; and if a dog howled, or an owl hooted, some awful consequence was looked upon as inevitable.

"A man, who had come through the forest at nightfall, declared that he was pursued by something in a female shape, even to the gate of the castle: he had seen it plainly, he said; it looked

like a desperate woman in a bad dream. Another had heard what he called false voices, singing behind the arras; a third had seen a woman sitting at night upon the steps of the entrance-hall, covered from head to foot with a black veil; and, worse confirmation! a torn canvas, on which was traced the likeness—as those who saw it fancied—of the Veiled Woman, was found amongst some rubbish in a corner of the very corridor already designated by superstition as the one described in the manuscript. And there it may still remain, for none present at its discovery dared to touch, or even approach it.

“I caused the stairs to be shut up, and condemned that portion of the building to which it led as uninhabitable; for the tide of opinion had set in so strongly against me, that to have erected my single self in opposition to its force would have been idle. For awhile things went on more cheerfully, and I began to hope that the fiend and her lover were almost forgotten; when, three nights ago, just as we rose from supper, some one rang the bell at the great gate.

“In our solitude, and at so late an hour, the

sound was unusual. It was answered instantly, but there was no one visible. Last night the same bell was rung, and with more authority. The gardener was on the spot, but saw nothing; he looked up and down the only path by which any thing human could have escaped, but there was no trace of living footstep. To-night the same sound has visited us, and at the same hour, and you, sir, have witnessed the consternation which it caused.

“My wife still holds out, but I dread that the contagion of my sister’s fears is fast reaching her. My sister was firm, too, once; has supported long imprisonment, the approach of death under a horrible form; and all the rigors of extreme misfortune without shrinking; but the dead from the grave! or the belief in their visitations—which is the same thing as far as the influence of fear over the mind is concerned, overpowers her strong spirit, and subdues it into weakness. Tangible danger she has faced boldly, but her eye dares not look into the vague created by her imagination.”

“The case is not a singular one,” said the

stranger thoughtfully. "I remember an Egyptian of Memphis who—but his story is a tedious one; this we all know, that the same man who has led on a forlorn hope has been seen to tremble at the moaning of the wind; and when he has kept watch at night on the battlement, has imagined that the hollow blast was the sound of the dead trumpet, or the neighing of the coal-black steed on whose back sits the knight whose vizor is never down, who rides always to the east, and neither stops or turns.

"And who says," he continued with a strange dilation of the eye, "who says that the dead come not? Is it you, sir? By the garment of the Nazarene, I believe you wrong!"

The count started, and the thought crossed his mind that he had given shelter to a madman.

"Can you pretend," continued the stranger vehemently, "to say who stands beside us, who sits in that chair, who fills the space which seems to you empty? I tell you that you have visitors whom you dream not of, and that your sister's wanderings have more reason in them than lies in your philosophy. Poor lady! she was grand in

the tribulations of the world ; there were partakers, and lookers-on, and recorders, but the people of the grave mock at glory. Pain, death, oppression come in the course of nature, or are inflicted by the power of man ; they are known and expected ills ; the mind measures them from the base to the summit, the eye compasses their dimensions, but no eye goes down into the grave, none see what passes in the sepulchre."

He paused a moment, while his host remained silently and anxiously watching the changes of his countenance ; then taking a light from the table, moved slowly towards the door, when the count stopping him, said,

"Before you go, sir, I wish to tell you that the chamber in which you have already been is the interdicted one. As it is not my wish to procure a voucher for its tranquillity by taking advantage of your ignorance, I have given orders that another should be prepared for your reception."

"Thanks, sir, for your kindness," returned the traveller: "but I should have begged that room of you from amongst a thousand: I have slept in chambers that you dream not of. And now, fare-

well! and believe that your hospitality to one, who brought with him nothing but his wants, can never be forgotten." He paused a moment, and then added with a faint smile, "I am no magician; but unusual circumstances, and a singular course of study, have somewhat removed me from the beaten paths of man. Perhaps I may be able to serve you in a way that you reckon not on. Farewell, sir, and may a more holy blessing than mine would be, rest upon your dwelling!" So saying, and without waiting for the reply which was starting from the lips of the count, he quitted the room, and in a few moments his step was heard ascending to his chamber.

When there, he bolted the door by which he had entered, and having ascertained that he was alone, unclosed the window that looked out upon the forest, and stood before it in profound meditation. The night was clear, the clouds flew by on heavenly messages; but he heeded them not. The solemn pageantry of heaven, the bright and glorious moon, the glittering stars keeping celestial watch in the night season, had ceased to exercise an influence over his imagination: the book of nature

was closed to him ; the power that could unlock its stores and revel in them, no longer found aliment in his dark and unstrung mind.

He turned from the window, and drawing back the bolts of the massive door which opened on the gallery, gazed for a moment on the mounted knight whose open eyes seemed fixed upon him, and then proceeded to search for the corridor in which the likeness of the Veiled Woman was said to have been discovered. He was not long in finding it. It was a narrow passage leading off from an obscure corner of the gallery, and without other opening than that through which it was entered, for the door that had once communicated with the winding staircase had been walled up. A heap of lumber lay upon the floor ; the traveller removed it, and found beneath that for which he sought—the likeness of the Veiled Woman.

He lifted it from the floor, and placing it upright against the wall, advanced his lamp and examined it attentively. It needed stout nerves to do so, for it was horrible !

It represented a woman in the habit of a nun ; a black veil hung over the face down to the lips,



which were pale, and chiselled like an ancient sculpture,—a Medea at the moment of the unnatural deed, or the murderess Clytemnestra holding her breath and stealing to the couch of her victim. A deadly expression lurked about them, an unknown expression, such as the nomenclature of man has no word for. But the eyes! they looked through the veil clearly—awfully, as if nothing hung before them; yet the veil was there—the black veil, with the dark and murderous light glaring through it.

“Immortal Hermes!” exclaimed the traveller, “it is she!—she who, at the unholy and interdicted hour, drew water from the sacred fountain of the Zemzen, and when the whirlwind is in the desert stands beside the highest pyramid, and extends her arms as if in wicked mockery of the great atonement. Lie there!” he continued, turning it down and trampling on it, “and be hid for ever, evil one.”

He returned to his chamber, double barred his door, and lay down to rest. He slept a moment, then waking with a start, looked round him. The chamber was dark, all except one spot feebly

lighted by the bickering flame of a small lamp. Suddenly the barred door burst open ; a cold moon-light streamed in through the great window, lighting up the gallery ghastlily. The knight was there, in the midst of the pale light, mounted on his pawing steed, his arm extended towards the door on whose threshold the stranger now stood, and raised his lamp to the face of the statue.

There was a movement in the corridor, a low rustling, a sound of something coming that had not the human step ; at the same moment the door of the chamber shut behind him with a loud concussion, as if a mighty gust had forced it forward, and the traveller stood alone beside the horse and his rider.

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It was morning, and the sun shone brightly ; the birds carolled in the boughs, and the river glided along smoothly and silently as if a summer sky was glowing on it. The count inquired for his guest ; but he had gone with the first light of morning. A letter

addressed to the count lay on a table ; he opened it, and read as follows :—

“The service which you rendered me last night, was far greater than you at the time imagined it to be. He whom you have served,—perhaps saved, would fain be, in return, of what use he could to you, and to your kind and virtuous family. When your sister spoke fearfully last night of that mysterious man whose name she hardly dared to pronounce, she little thought that he who sat beside her was Mesmer ! that Mesmer whom persecutions, such as man never before endured, have driven almost beyond the pale of human nature.

“Receive my thanks, and rely on what I now tell you. Never again shall viewless hands toll at your gate, or other sounds than familiar ones be heard within your halls. Open your doors, remove your staircase, change the face of those chambers which fear has placed under the ban, break up the knight and his steed, and let the sound of joy be heard once more in your dwelling.

“Farewell ! you have nothing to dread but from man,—the natural enemy of his species. Man, instinct with destruction, is the common foe against

whom we must all combat: but of the dead—no more.”

The count mused, re-read the letter, and doubted whether it was a visionary who raved, or a sage who counselled; but the advice was good, and he followed it. The doors were thrown open, the staircase removed, the face of the apartment changed, the horse and his rider sent to the foundry, and the sound of joy was once more heard in his dwelling.



# ANTONIA.

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Oft her father's halls  
Magnificent among,  
She, now so mute, had sung  
Full many a lovely air,  
In maiden beauty fresh and fair ;  
And with the warbled music of her voice  
Made all his joyous bowers still more rejoice.

*Symmons' Eschylus. (Agamemnon.)*

Peregrina e sola  
Come dolente e disperata andrai,  
E per camin nessun saluterai.

*Sannazaro.*

I KNELT on the vigil of the Assumption in the church of Saint Stephen at Genoa. It was the shut of evening, and the crowd had departed ; three or four devout persons alone remained absorbed in prayer, —they were of the aged poor, who have no other comfort.

A single lamp burned before an obscure altar,  
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and the image of Mary of the Angels rested on it. My veil was turned back; I had thrown it off, for my heart was oppressed and I wished to breathe freely. At the same hour, and on the same holy eve, she whom I had so dearly loved expired in my arms. O, what a first sorrow was that for a heart, which had never known a previous one! Dear and gentle mother! I thought your blessed shade hovered over me. I looked upwards, my soul sought you in the heaven above. Just then an exclamation, in a language foreign to my ear, broke upon me. I started, and my eyes met those of a stranger fixed steadfastly upon my face, with an expression of pleased surprise that embarrassed me.

He stood within the railing of the altar, as if to view the glorious picture placed above it; the curtain was withdrawn, and the priest, whose office it was to show it, dwelt with rapture on its power and splendor. But the eye of the stranger was turned from it; his voice assented, but wanderingly, and as if he knew not to what. I cannot tell how I observed all this, for I had covered my face and removed to a distance as soon as I had become sensible of his presence.

While I rose from my knees, the priest pointed

out another chapel, urging him to look upon its riches ; but he answered in Italian, and in a voice which dwelt long upon my ear, refusing courteously, and adding that his limited time obliged him to confine his admiration to one sole object. I delayed a little, while he moved lingeringly towards the porch ; the priest lifted up the curtain under which the stranger passed, and then saluting him with a respectful air, returned to his duties.

I knew not why this incident made so lively an impression on me ; it was but one glance, one sound, yet my recollection of his look was perfect. I should have known it in another world,—and the voice,—and even the fall of the footstep.

I felt ashamed of having been seen alone and unveiled, and sat down near to the entrance of the church to compose my thoughts a little ; then recollecting that the Angelus had ceased, and that if I tarried longer it would be night before I could reach my home, (I who had never before left it unaccompanied,) hastened forward. My kind Giudetta had gone that evening to perform some charitable office in a remote quarter of the city, and I had stolen out, unprotected to pray to her



who had left me behind in an unknown world, and to tell her how she was loved and mourned.

As I descended the steps a man stood near, who when I had gone a few paces from the church seemed to follow me. Timid by nature, and rendered more so by my solitary mode of life, I became frightened; and while I hurried on tremblingly, felt my strength forsake me as the sound of his steps approached nearer. The man, who was a person of the middle class of life, passed me, staring boldly; and then re-passed, and continued following. I believe he spoke, but my increasing terror prevented me from hearing distinctly.

As yet my way had been through a peopled street, but now a narrow foot-path lay before me, walled on one side and with a line of deserted gardens at the other. I looked round; my persecutor was close to me, and smiling dreadfully. My heart beat with audible violence, a cold dew stood upon my forehead; I breathed with difficulty, and my knees knocked together. At this moment I had reached a church, nearly at the entrance of the dreaded pathway; the door was open, a lamp burned before the altar. I made an effort to enter it, intending to ask the protection of some devout

soul, if any should be still lingering within, but my head grew giddy, my feet slipped, I sunk against a column, and the next moment felt myself supported by some one who tried to raise me from the pavement.

While I struggled to disengage myself, the door of the church was fastened from within, and the last hope of refuge lost! O the horror of that sound! I have suffered much since, but the mortal agony of that moment is as fresh as ever. I would have screamed, but my voice was suffocated in my throat; I gasped for breath, I clung to the pillar,—there was a noise of persons struggling together, a dragging of feet on the pavement, and then some one fled; I heard the retreating footsteps.

Suddenly a voice—I thought it was the stranger's—came upon my ear; I listened: it spoke again, bidding me fear nothing. It was his! O with what joy I heard it! I knew not why I put my trust in him whom I had seen but for a moment, but I did so fearlessly. He raised me up, and in a little while I was sufficiently recovered to walk homewards with his assistance.

It was quite dark when we reached the garden that enclosed our dwelling, but I knew it by its

perfume of orange-blossoms. Giudetta had not returned, and Mariana sat within the trellissed porch, with her lap on a stone table beside her, watching for us. I did not ask the stranger to come in, but he entered with me ; and learning from Mariana that she was alone in the house, courteously begged permission to remain and protect us until my friend, or our old gardener Luigi, who was also absent, had returned.

Giudetta arrived first—in a few minutes after me, I thought—but not (as she said) till more than half an hour had elapsed. She was surprised to find me with my veil on, standing in the porch with an unknown person beside me, to whom I, who had never spoken with any other man than the good Father Anselmo and our old gardener, seemed to listen with timid pleasure. I told her all, and in the fulness of my heart spoke of my terror and of my deliverer with a courage which nothing but gratitude could have given me.

He was distressed by my acknowledgments, calling them unmerited ; but more so when Giudetta, after warmly thanking him for having rescued me from the frightful peril into which I had fallen, asked suddenly, and with her searching

eyes fixed upon me, where we had first met. I knew not why I felt guilty, but I did so, when I answered in a timid voice, "In the church of Saint Stephen."

It was the first time that I had passed the threshold of our dwelling without Giudetta, and her countenance instantly assumed an expression of severity that it had never before worn. I could not bear it; but throwing myself on her neck burst into tears, and told her through my sobs that my heart had been so heavy after she had left me in the early evening, I had thought so long and so fondly of my mother, that it would have broken if I had not gone into the church where I had last prayed beside her. I would have told her, too, that darkness had come upon me unawares, and all that had crossed my mind on first seeing the stranger, for I had forgotten that he was present; but she pressed me to her heart, and would here no more.

At last we all became more composed, and Giudetta praying the stranger to partake of the grapes and figs which were placed upon the table. He sat down with us, and I could see that there were traces of tears on his eyelashes. The glare of the lamp fell upon his features; Giudetta started in

visible emotion, but quickly recovering herself, continued to converse with him until the moon rose ; and then she pointed to it with a serious and expressive look, and said, " It is time that you should go. May peace be with you ! "

" May I not come again ? " he said, in an agitated and entreating voice.

" No more, " she replied firmly. " This child (looking at me) has no parent,—no protector on earth but myself. My love for her mother surpassed the love of woman ; she died in peace bequeathing to my care this sacred deposit. We live here alone, and never go out except it be to fulfil our religious duties, or perform such offices of charity as religion enjoins ; but even in our close obscurity we are not below report. Our humble neighbors respect us for the purity and inoffensiveness of our lives ; were a person of your appearance to visit here, a.....Need I say more ! "

" No, madam, " said the stranger, interrupting her. " I understand and respect your motives ; but deeply lament— " Then stopping suddenly, and approaching the spot where I stood, he said something—I did not well know what, but thought it was a wish for my happiness. A strange ringing

in my ears prevented me from hearing distinctly ; I felt that he took my hand, but he was gone, and I heard the heavy gate swing after him before I knew that he had left us.

Giudetta blessed and bade me good night with more even than her usual tenderness ; but the next morning her manner was serious, and she seemed buried in thought. For myself I found the heat oppressive, and walked out upon the terrace on which the windows of my chamber opened. From this terrace a footway, that led through the vineyards from the town to the sea-shore, was visible at some distance ; it was but little frequented, and only by the neighboring peasants. I had never seen any other persons there ; but this day a figure passed repeatedly, and often stopped and looked towards our dwelling. It was he ; no trace of his features was discernable, but I could not be mistaken. I placed myself on a seat behind the vines, that fell over the front of the terrace and formed its leafy roof ; slight stone pillars supported that roof in front, after the fashion of the terraces of Genoa, and between the pillars were vases full of orange-trees, pomegranate, and the interwoven foliage of the dark-leaved jessamine, which con-

ceased me entirely from view. Giudetta came and went frequently, but did not appear to give any attention to my movements. I wished her to have questioned me, because concealment weighed upon my heart ; but she did not, and I could not be the first to speak.

Four weeks passed away. Every day I visited my terrace at sunrise, and again at noon, finding it fresh and balmy even in the hottest hours ;—the same figure was always visible. I used to watch it till all around me was in shade, and then I sat and looked upon the sea and upon the heavens, and found a pleasure in those dreamy moments that nothing else had ever given me.

I have often wondered since that the alteration in Giudetta's appearance did not sooner strike me, but my mind was full of other images. It was one evening, as we sat together on the terrace,—now my paradise,—that looking on her face, I felt a sudden shock at seeing it strangely altered ; it seemed more aged, and her eyes had a sad and unaccustomed look. An indescribable emotion seized me ; it was a look that I remembered in my mother's eyes when she used to gaze upon me, knowing herself that she was soon to leave

us, though I knew it not. "Dearest Giudetta," I exclaimed, overcome by the sad recollections that rushed to my mind, "dearest friend! you too are not going to forsake me!"

She looked alarmed, but quickly recovering herself, said calmly, "Never, my child, while my presence can be useful to you."

I certainly had no distinct apprehension of misfortune, but the solemnity of her manner, and the alteration in her countenance, awakened a vague dread of something painful; a shadowy fear that groped in the dark, and could not find its object. Had I been aware of the whole extent of the evil which threatened me, I should have met it with more courage; but to be pursued by a dreaded but unknown something, without shape or dimensions, was frightful.

That day, and for the first time since my fatal visit to the church of Saint Stephen, Giudetta went out alone, telling me not to quit my chamber during her absence. I obeyed her injunctions scrupulously, closing the blinds of the windows that looked upon my terrace, and occupying myself mechanically: it was all that I could do. It was late when she returned; she seemed harassed and



fatigued, but instead of reposing, talked of having much to occupy her time, and fondly embracing me, left me once more to my fears.

I did not see her again till we met at our evening repast two hours after the usual time. We sat in silence: my friend seemed violently agitated, and my heart fluttered like an imprisoned bird. At length she took my hand and pressed it affectionately, saying at the same time and with visible emotion, "Antonia, you know how dear you are to me, how entirely every thought of my mind, every prayer of my heart is for your happiness; you will not then doubt that what I am about to do is the result of mature reflection, and the most anxious love. This night we leave Genoa."

"Leave Genoa!" I exclaimed; "quit the spot which holds the tomb of my mother! O never! Who will watch her grave, or pray by it, when I am gone? And the house where I have lived with her—and the room—that room!" I meant the chamber where she had died, where Giudetta and I had often prayed together. I could not name it then, my heart was too full; but she understood my meaning, and wept with me. It was long before she could bring me to reason, but her gentle

steadiness and the reverence which I felt for her at length prevailed. In all this time I thought but of my mother, and he who had so long divided my mind was quite forgotten. Alas! forgotten only for a little while, to be again too well remembered.

—II.—

It was not yet day-break, when we quitted the only home of which I had any recollection. Luigi and Mariana (they had been my mother's servants) followed us in tears; the lonely light still burned in the watch-tower, but the stars were extinguished. A greyish melancholy dawn faintly developed the objects around us, while thick vapors lay heavily on the waters, confounding sea and sky together.

We embarked in silence; our vessel was a small trader bound for Marseilles. There were no other passengers on board, and I sat upon the deck stifling the tears to which I dared not give vent, lest my Giudetta should be grieved at my sorrow. My head rested on her shoulder, and as I strained

my eyes to discover through the grey of morning the well-known cypress whose shadow fell upon the grave of my mother, a red ray kindled in the west, and threw its light upon the vineyard; all around was cold and shrowded, but that spot was bright. Our sails were spread, but the wind shifted, and as the vessel tacked about to catch the breeze; we approached nearer to the shore; near enough to inhale the perfume of the orange-groves, near enough to see the same figure pacing slowly up and down the vineyard pathway, and stopping every now and then in front of our deserted dwelling, but never turning towards the sea! A cruel light seemed to break upon me. I had never asked myself the question, "Is it to look upon our dwelling that he comes?" I had never reflected that we were surrounded by neighbors, or that in the cottage adjoining to our garden lived Barbata Sada, whose beauty was the daily theme of Mariana's story. A moment before it seemed as if my unhappiness was incapable of increase, but this was a rent in the heart. I felt my dream of hope withering, and knew then how dear it was to me.

The idea too of having exposed myself to derision haunted me; I blushed at my vanity, and

wished that fate had made me like Barbara. Then I tried to recollect her face; and though I had seen it but once, and then imperfectly, yet it seemed to come upon my memory distinctly, and like that of an angel. I had never read a romance; my ideas of female beauty had been imbibed from the legends of the saints. I imagined that she must have the golden hair of the holy Agnes, and the pure and star-like eyes of Saint Catharine. Every thing seemed now explained,—and too clearly. Had it been me whom he had thought of, he would have sooner found out that I was no longer there; he would have traced us to the shore, his eyes would have sought us on the sea! but there he stood, still looking on the gardens, as if the treasure of his heart were enclosed within their walls.

But garden and grave, my terraced home—now mine no longer, the sweeping bay, the gorgeous palaces, were all soon alike invisible. The form of Barbara Sada alone remained before me, and so beautiful it seemed, that I wondered at the egregious vanity which had induced me to suppose that one of poor attractions like myself could have been thought of near so perfect a creature. The sailors placed pillows for us on the deck; and when I had

at length wept myself to sleep, I thought that she lay upon the waves beside me, mocking me with her bright smile, and pointing backwards to the vineyard pathway.

For three days we sailed along the purple shores where the palm rises, and the olive-groves lie upon the hills like blue vapor. At length we reached Marseilles, and found ourselves in another land, but with the sky of Italy still above us. That same evening, as we sat in a trellised balcony looking at the stars, and thinking—not talking—of our distant home, I suddenly found courage (knowing that my blushes could not be seen) to say, "How pretty the young girl was, who offered us fruit this morning as we landed."

"Yes," replied Giudetta, "her beauty was striking."

"Yet not so striking," said I, "as that of our lovely neighbor, Barbara Sada."

"Not so showy," she answered, "but infinitely sweeter and more engaging. Barbara is a vulgar beauty; robust, well made, and blooming, but without either grace or expression. She is unquestionably handsome, but her beauty has no charm."

"Ah," said I anxiously, "do you indeed think so? I have often wished to be as handsome as Barbara."

"You!" exclaimed Giudetta, and an incredulous laugh followed the exclamation. It was a joyous sound, and I laughed too, though I had spoken in sober seriousness.

I had always dearly loved Giudetta, but I think never so dearly as at that moment. O, how quickly my fancy returned to its illusions! how quickly did my heart discover that no vulgar beauty could have interested his! I did not exactly inquire whether I was myself the person likely to do so; but Barbara certainly was not, and that conviction was enough for happiness.

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We did not stay long at Marseilles; my dear friend was anxious to get to Paris, and all places were alike to me. But how cold and sunless, how vast and gloomy did that great city appear when we entered it on a drizzling day, and thought of the blue heaven and sunny hills of Italy! I looked out from our dreary apartment in a dark, narrow, and (I thought) interminable street, upon the

opposite houses, and felt how much more melancholy it was to live alone in the world than in the desert. Genoa had been to us a desert; we had held no communication with any but the poor and ignorant, had no friends, no acquaintances; but then we saw nothing from our terrace but the sea and the vineyards, and the broad skies where the sun shone out alone, or the stars kept silent company: we knew nothing of household ties or fond relationships, but all that we looked upon was familiar to us; we were solitary but not strangers; we were alone, but we did not witness the fond communings of others. But there—in that great city, crowds passed, friends met friends; the cordial greeting, the affectionate though trite salute, was given and returned; few went or came but spared a word or a moment to a neighbor or acquaintance. We had none to welcome us; we were strangers!—Jreary word, that means solitude in the midst of crowds, and in the joyous spread of kindly feeling meets nothing that will own kindred with it.

But confidence is the instinct of the young and inexperienced, and the sorrows of a heart with the quick pulses of sixteen beating in it, are not eternal. I had felt poignantly, I had sincerely believed myself

the most wretched creature in existence ; I had even loved my grief, and felt angry with myself when I found it fast giving way to the delightful sensations of that exulting age, when the mere consciousness of existence is positive happiness.

We soon left our melancholy quarter, whose hollow bustle had sounded to us like the dreary action of the coming and going waves that make no home with the rocks they beat upon, and established ourselves in a distant suburb, where we occupied a cheerful apartment looking on a garden full of spring-flowers, — streaked crocuses, early polyanthus, budding lilac, dwarf and tulips in their quaint bed, edged trimly round with sweet-savored herbs, or violets that under the shade of the cherry, or the purple tree of Judea, put forth as many flowers as leaves, and charmed the eye with their blush of new-born beauty, their tender and unaspiring sweetness. The only inhabitants of our house were an elderly woman of devout and retired habits, and a young person who acted as our servant ; three large acacias, planted before our windows, promised to screen us with their beautiful foliage from the heat of the summer sun, and while we waited for its genial influence, the



dome of a neighboring church, and a few scattered cottages with their little gardens just bursting into bud, looked in upon us through their open branches.

Almost worshipping as I did—and with higher feelings than those of earthly adoration—the blue mountain in its distance, or the nearer one in its severer majesty, it seemed to me, at first, as if a timid and common-place nature as we now looked upon could have little charm; but its calm crept into my heart, its simplicity soothed me like a prayer; I found in its humble but still renewing beauty a symbol of quiet hope, to which my mind gradually attached itself. I delighted in our cottage and its little garden, and though I sometimes wished that it had hung upon the side of a mountain, yet I soon found myself loving its hedge of rosemary, and wild barberries, and the large white convolvulus that tangled all sweet and budding things together, almost as dearly as the statued walls of my own Italy.

In this humble retreat I found constant occupation, and with it happiness, the faculty of fixing my mind on simple cares, and engrossing it with placid duties. We never went out but to church,

or to walk in the garden of a neighboring convent. Our servant purchased whatever we stood in need of, and we seemed to have always sufficient, not only for the supply of our simple wants, but for the modest comforts to which we had been accustomed. Giudetta sometimes wrote a few lines to the person who (as she told me) undertook the management of her small fortune, and twice she received the visits of a stranger, who came apparently on matters of business; more I knew not, nor did the subject of our means of existence ever cross my mind for a moment. We drew and worked, nursed the flowers in our garden, and read aloud alternately, and in the evening we sat in our balcony telling stories of the past, and singing old airs and barcaroles, worthless as music, but dear to us because they breathed of Italy. But I could think of Italy now without tears—at least of bitterness, and when the leaves and flowers were out, and that every bud diffused sweetness, I thought—I dare not say I felt, that I regretted nothing but the grave of my mother.

One evening, as we returned from vespers, two persons passed us; they seemed to seek their way, and turning back, inquired something of Giudetta;

they spoke in a strange tongue, but she answered fluently and as if accustomed to it. I asked her of what country they were ; she said of England, adding carelessly, that she had learned something of the language in her youth, and then changed the conversation. There was an air of mystery in her way of evading any farther question that piqued my curiosity, and made an impression on my mind which so trivial an incident did not seem to justify.

—III.—

About this time an English lady came to live near to us in the house of a gardener, who used sometimes to bring us fruit for sale. She was described as a person of distinguished appearance, an exile through fallen fortunes, and in a state of health which obliged her to depend upon the services of others ; yet friendless and alone,—without even the support which feebleness receives from the kind offices of a faithful servant.

My friend was visibly touched by this account ; the story of an exile was always sure to interest

her deeply; even in Italy she would sometimes talk of the grief of living in a foreign land, as if the one she dwelt in had not been her own. Nothing (she would say) belongs to the exile; at home all is ours; there we feed on sympathy, while the banished die of thought,—thought that never wakens echo or response! All day long she talked about the foreign lady, sick—perhaps dying—amidst strangers, and wished to be with her, but dreaded lest the strict decorum of English manners might be offended by her intrusion. But when our servant Nanine, who had been sent to make inquiries, returned and told us that she had looked through the half-closed door, and seen the poor invalid extended on a couch, pale as a corpse wrapped in its grave cloths, Giudetta could no longer subdue her feelings, but starting from her seat, quitted the room.

I saw her a moment afterwards pass through the garden, and take the direction of our neighbor's house. She did not return for many hours, and then she seemed so sad and so absorbed that I dared not question her. At length she said, "Antonia, the lady is very ill,—I think dying; I must be often with her. Heaven perhaps has

directed her here, that I (of all others!) should receive her last words. But good God! how awful is retributive justice!" and then she paused as if she had said too much, and was again silent.

For some time Giudetta continued her daily visits to the sick woman, staying long, and rarely speaking when she returned home of the object of her solicitude. During her absence, I sometimes walked out with Ursula Bertin, or as she was usually called, Sister Ursula, the pious person with whom we lodged; and our steps were oftenest directed to a mean and solitary dwelling in the fields, not far from our cottage, in which three children lay dangerously ill of a fever, while their mother and her youngest babe were slowly recovering from the effects of the same cruel malady. I had been taught not to shrink from the sight of wretchedness, and early accustomed to go amongst the poor of our neighborhood at Genoa; but this was such squalid and naked misery as I had never before beheld,—the poor souls wanted every thing. We did what we could for them; but after a few days it seemed that another, and one with means as large as his heart, had pitied their wretchedness, for all was changed; decent furniture, a nurse for

the sick, abundant and healthful food, in short every help and alleviation that benevolence could suggest had been provided. It was a worthy person (the poor woman said) who, passing that way, had taken shelter from a sudden storm under their wretched roof; and chancing thus to witness their distress, had himself brought them many comforting and useful things, and helped with his own blessed hands to arrange the beds which his kindness had provided for her children. Ursula, whose life was spent among the poor and suffering, knew how to appreciate the charity which itself administers its benefits; she had seen good people pained by their own barrenness of feeling, their want of sympathy with distress when it wore a disgusting form, and her thin earnest face glowed with pious admiration as she listened. It was doubtless some benevolent ecclesiastic, (she said,) or perhaps the almoner of the archbishop. The woman thought it likely, as he was dressed in black and spoke but little; yet could not say, for the room was dark, and she was too much overcome by surprise and gratitude to mark him distinctly.

While we talked thus, a gentle tap was heard at the door, and the person of whom we were speak-

ing entered, and approached the bed without at first perceiving us. The mourning dress which Ursula always wore, gave her the air of a sister of charity; he took her for one, and bowed respectfully. I stood back in the shade and concealed my face; he did not at first recognise me, but I knew the sound of his footsteps,—knew it instantly, before he had uttered a word. I cannot tell how it happened, but our eyes had met, had acknowledged each other; a token of mutual recognition, a sign of silence had passed, and yet not a sound had escaped us,—not the slightest movement. It was but a look, and that so transient that I hardly could have said that I had seen him. The start which he had given when the form of my large white veil (for I still wore it in the Genoese fashion) betrayed me to him, was unperceived by the good Ursula, who stood wondering, that one so young and so handsome, a stranger—and probably a heretic, should be so considerably benevolent.

We returned home as usual,—the stranger not offering to attend us, but following at an unobtrusive distance. As we entered the garden, Nanine came towards us holding out a note; it was from Giudetta: the lady was dying—not expected to go

*Miss Emma Miller  
a morning walk ye may*  
ANTONIA. *Received 70  
Oct 2 1891*

through the night; it was impossible to leave her, even for a moment. She then counselled me not to walk beyond the limits of our garden, as a storm was gathering, and bade me tenderly good night. Her absence seemed a respite. I blushed while I made the silent acknowledgment, and while accusing myself of egotism and ingratitude, was yet pleased, in spite of my upbraiding feelings, to be alone.

#### —IV.—

The evening was sultry; it was that kind of breathless heat which usually precedes a thunder-storm. The birds nestled in the boughs, hanging their wings; or, descending rapidly towards the earth, wheeled round in dizzy circles, crossing and re-crossing each other, and sweeping the grass in their wild evolutions with a swift and frightened movement. A light shiver agitated the leaves, as if a quick wing had brushed them in its flight, gusts of sudden sweetness and showers of light blossoms filled the air; but suddenly it became heavier; the boughs waved sluggishly and by fits,



as if agitated by an internal power,—a breath that sprung up and died away within them ; a scent of sulphur mingled with the fresh perfume of the earth, and a few large drops fell slowly and heavily, sending up the dust in the garden path in little eddies, and breaking on the light leaves of the acacias with a soft and plashy sound.

I stood watching the varying lights and changeful heavens, when Ursula, who was easily alarmed, came to fasten the windows ; and while she was thus employed, a boy, who sometimes worked in the garden and who had access to our house, brought me a basket full of roses. As I took the flowers to place them in a vase, he gave me a letter ; it was carelessly folded, and I rather saw than read a few words traced upon the open part. I thought it was for me, but those few words told me that it was addressed to Gfidetta ; they told me more,—a secret, and that the dearest and most precious that heart can tell to heart.

Time has since passed away,—sorrowfully or happily ; years have gone by, chequered—as years always will be—by tears and smiles ; hope and disappointment have had their turn ; but that moment—that first moment (perhaps the sweetest

of existence) has never left my memory. I could no longer doubt that I was the object of his affection, the beloved ! Precious conviction ! which the purest heart may garner up amongst its innocent treasures.

When my eyes first fell upon the paper, the idea of a secret communication alarmed me dreadfully ; but my heart was relieved by finding that he did not seek concealment. I placed it in my bosom, intending to give it to Giudetta when she returned ; but night came on, and she was still absent. A line from her explained the cause,—the lady was dying ; her agony had been long and cruel, but life yet lingered, though scarcely marked by the faint beatings of the feeble and intermitting pulse. I was deeply touched by the image of this death-bed scene : it pursued me in the midst of my fresh and blossoming hopes. All night the storm raved, and as the winds howled in the heavens, and noises like the clattering of arms or the bursting of deadly artillery were heard in the air, I thought of the passing soul whose hollow knell was tolled out so awfully.

I enclosed the note to Giudetta, with the detail of all that had passed in her absence, for I felt the

necessity of perfect candor; and then slept like a happy child, with the new toy upon its pillow. Mine was the flowery to-morrow, and I closed my eyes thinking how sweet it would be to wake to its enjoyment.

When I rose, the wind had subsided; it was a fresh and balmy morning; a gentle air agitated the flowers and shook the rain-drops from their perfumed bells. The sun looked out gaily upon the glistening landscape, and the inhabitants of the neighboring cottages (chiefly market-gardeners and their families) were scattered about, industriously repairing the mischief caused by the tempest of the preceding night. I too strolled out, to see how my orange-trees (for I had three, and loved them better than all the roses of my garden) had borne it, and there stood Ursula talking with the stranger. I was close to them before I knew that he was there; and when I did, it would have been rude and childish to have turned back,—at least my heart said so.

Just then Ursula recollected that something in the house required her attention, and quitted us abruptly. We remained for some time silent, he standing outside the low honeysuckle fence that

enclosed the garden, and I within. At length he spoke ; I think I did not answer him, but he continued timidly yet earnestly to urge his suit, and to entreat an interview with her whom he believed to be my mother. It was Giudetta's voice that interrupted him ; I heard its sound as she approached the cottage, and hastened to meet her ; but first we said adieu ! adieu until to-morrow. Ah, who can say "until to-morrow !" Who can tell what chance may lurk in that brief space !

My friend was pale, and seemed worn out with watching ; we embraced each other, as if our separation had been one of years,—it was our first. The lady was no more. It was an awful scene, Giudetta said, an appalling death-bed ! and then, as if hurrying from the *récollection*, But you wrote to me, my Antonia, (she added ;) what have I done with your note ?—O here it is ; they gave it to me in a terrible moment, I had quite forgotten it. But what is this ? a foreign hand ?" O how I trembled ! I dared not look at her,—but I heard the paper rustle in her quivering fingers ; a moment after she rose in extreme agitation, and quitted the room.

In half an hour Nanine brought me a folded

paper, on which was written, "Circumstances relative to the unfortunate person whose death I last night witnessed, will occupy me wholly for some hours; remain within doors, and refuse admittance to any who may call. To-morrow all shall be explained."

—V.—

And the next day, as we sat under the shade of the acacias, Giudetta pressed my hand tenderly, and turning her eyes, red with weeping, on me, said, "Events have lately occurred which induce me to change a resolution formed under other circumstances. As yet, dearest Antonia, many events connected with your mother's story are unknown to you; I believed, as she herself did, that it was needless, and would be perhaps unwise, to overcast the sunshine of youth with mournful recollections. You were told that your father was a man of noble birth who died early, and knew that your mother, overwhelmed by grief and wasted by ill health, had withdrawn from the world in the spring-tide of life; that sorrow had consumed the

germ of existence and sent her to an early grave, where we alone—we two—all that remained of friends or relatives—mourned over her.”

My convulsive sobs here interrupted Giudetta. For a few moments we wept together; then making an effort to recover herself, she thus continued:—  
“So far you already know; but you are not aware that your father was an Englishman.” I started.  
“Be composed, my love, (she said,) and I will tell you all. It is a dismal story, my Antonia, and I would fain have spared you the sorrow of hearing it, at least for some time; but circumstances no longer allow me to remain silent.

“Your mother was the only child of a noble and wealthy Venetian, and allied to most of the patrician families of that ancient state. Her father, a man of letters and distinguished attainments, had in his youth visited many countries, and been in intercourse with the most celebrated characters of various nations. He had acquired in the contact of society a liberal mode of thinking, and a delicacy of tact which made his conversation eminently delightful, and drew round him the elite amongst those strangers of distinction who at that time thronged to Venice from all parts of the known

world, for Venice was then the world's wonder ; the learned, the curious, the studious, and the dissipated, congregated there. The languages of Cairo and of Bussora, of Greece and India, were spoken in her streets ; many English came, and were the guests of your grandfather, for he loved their country, which he had visited in his youth, and he loved its people,—its brave free people, as he used to call them.

“The fame of your mother's dawning beauty was soon buzzed through Venice. She was, at the time I speak of, in that lovely age when the awakening mind first begins to light up the pure countenance, giving the charm of mental feeling and the mutable graces of expression to features still full of the innocence of childhood. At that period the ladies of Venice were deemed pre-eminent in loveliness ; in every town in Europe where a string was touched, or a moonlight echo awakened, the dark eyes, the graceful movement, the shy sweet glance of the Venetian girl were sung to the notes of the tender lute, or the lighter melody of the soft guitar. But when Antonia Loredano appeared surrounded by the brightest beauties of the day, all were effaced. It was not that her fea-

tures were more perfect than those of her companions, for many might have served as models of symmetry; but that a charm distinct and individual was diffused over her whole person, a blush of freshness, a perfume of beauty, which the eye saw and the heart acknowledged, without exactly knowing in what look or movement it dwelt. Others were young, fair, graceful, but none looked as she did; the character of her beauty was so purely original, that I do not recollect to have ever seen any picture or person that in the least resembled her, yourself alone excepted. Sorrow and sickness had tarnished the splendor of her loveliness when you were old enough to have remarked it; yet you must remember how beautiful she was even then, and how her tender melancholy smile, and the blush that always accompanied it, sunk into the heart. A woman of the lower class,—a sinner,—whom she had persuaded from error, once said to me, ‘Why does she smile? She has no right to do so with her broken heart. When she smiles, I weep; and yet it does me good. I feel as if an angel whispered, ‘Annunziata,—thou art forgiven!’

“But I dwell too long on early remembrances.



About this period, your grandfather, Count Vicenzio di Loredano, being obliged to quit Venice for some time, placed his daughter as a temporary inmate in the convent in which I was then a boarder, wishing that during his absence she might be under the immediate protection of his sister, who was the lady-abbess. Thus we became acquainted, and almost immediately familiar friends.

“That convent! O, how fondly my heart still lingers on the happy hours passed within its walls! how distinctly I can even now remember every post and stone, every carved window and gothic niche of the narrow piazzetta, of which our dwelling occupied one side, and our church another, and the four small trees in the centre, that we called a grove, and talked of its shade and foliage. The lone canal, too, black and sluggish, on which the song of the gondolieri was but rarely heard, clings to my memory; and I still see the ancient lady, whose casement fronted our church, and who every evening when the Angelus tolled slowly, unclosed her window, and kneeling in front of it on her small velvet cushion of faded crimson, turned her pale imploring face towards the crucifix carved above the portal, and prayed as if the sorrows of

the world had left her but one hope, and that one in heaven.

“My Mother, a lady of ancient family in Dauphine, had married one to whom she had been dear from her childhood,—a faithful lover and of gentle blood, but of poor fortune. He had toiled much to better it, and after serving in the army with unproductive honor, had laid down his sword and engaged in commercial speculations. Success seemed at length to repay his exertions; he was gradually amassing a respectable fortune, and lived in humble happiness with the wife of his heart at Venice, blest in each other’s love, yet always regretting (and teaching me to regret) amidst the eternal jubilee of that festive city, the quiet scenes of their youth, the hills and woods, the fields and vineyards of their beloved Dauphine; and hoping at last to find themselves rich enough to return to the home of their youth, and to buy back the land of their inheritance,—the holy land where their fathers lived,—out of the hands of strangers. A natural and honest hope, but destined never to be realized.

“When your mother and myself first met, she felt (as she has often repeated) as if she had known me in another world; my voice seemed familiar

to her ear, and my face like one she had seen in her dreams. As for me,—serious and reserved, accustomed only to the society of my parents or the monotony of a convent, and knowing nothing of the world, I looked upon her with admiring wonder, as on something bright and rare, for which I could not find a name; something not calendered on man's tablets, but belonging to angels. I had never fancied that any thing human could wear her look; but the sweet courteousness of her manners, the pure and gentle mind that beamed out at her eyes and spoke in her soft accents, soon dissipated the constraint imposed by the splendor of her mien and high accomplishments.

“A few days' intercourse made us perfectly known and for ever dear to each other; she prized me for my frank heart and true nature, and I loved her for a soul more beautiful even than the form in which it was enshrined.

“It was her delight to talk of England, and to instruct me in its language with which she was perfectly conversant. Her father had taught her to understand and love the dramas of its great bard, the mighty master whose bold hand had

thrown the poet's rainbow,—the double rainbow of thought and fancy,—over the quaint web of old Italian story. How often since in the more agitated scenes of after life have we looked back with regret to those calm hours,—not registered in the catalogue of pompous pleasures, but engraven on the heart.

“Five months passed thus: at the end of that period Count Loredano returned and reclaimed his daughter. She went to exercise the gentle dominion of virtue and loveliness in her courtly home, to lead the stars—herself the brightest—that diffused light and splendor on the gay scene of festal enjoyment; and I remained to dwell on the sweet intercourse, the community of thoughts and feelings that during five short months had so delightfully chequered the quiet by-way of life through which it was my destiny to glide. I did not repine at the contrast; true I was envious, but it was of those who could approach, could serve, could listen to her.

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“My friend came often to see me, and to talk of all that pleased and all that wearied her in her new way of life. Ah, how you recall her at this

moment to my mind ! It was thus that she used to look as she sat within the windowed niche of our convent parlor, her arm resting on the small table that stood before us, and her white and slender fingers pressed against her pure cheek ;— it was her habitual attitude. She often talked of strangers from various countries who were received into her father's circle, and at length it struck me that she (without being aware of it herself) introduced their names to bring in one, always mentioned last, but longest dwelt upon. He who bore it was an Englishman of rank, distinguished at Venice for the splendor of his bearing in society, but still more by his high attainments and courteous demeanour. I was certainly the first who became sensible of the impression he had made upon her ; she was herself ignorant of it, and when I hinted to her my suspicions, seemed to awaken as from a dream,— alas ! even then too long, though unknowingly indulged in.

“ To be brief,—your mother's preference created by the high qualities for which Lord Stanmore was beyond all others distinguished, and fostered by that silent devotion which hides itself from

common eyes only to become more evident to those before which alone it seeks to manifest itself, soon strengthened into the deep sentiment which at once decides the character and fate of her, whose sweet and bitter lot it is to have a real heart. She never spoke to me of his rank, his fortune, his success in society, or personal advantages ; but dwelt for ever, and with a dangerous indulgence of enthusiasm, on his fine mind, his quick susceptibility of all that was eminent in art or beautiful in nature, his high acquirements, and above all his deep and passionate sensibility, forgetting that admiration—at first only an emotion—when prolonged, becomes a sentiment which deepens as it feeds, until, like the fly that draws its colors from the flower it lives on, it is itself lost in the object of its worship.

“The count, her father, cherished the same feeling, and warmly applauded her choice. Nothing retarded the union of two persons, who seemed destined for each other, but the consent of Lord Stanmore's father, which he seemed certain of obtaining. Indeed, what father could hesitate to receive into his home and heart a creature so formed to confer distinction by her choice, and to

create happiness by her presence? So thought Count Loredano, and certain that she, the adored of all adorers—rich, noble, beautiful, and virtuous, would be welcomed as a blessing, he felt but little disappointment when a letter arrived from England bringing—not the expected assent—but the intelligence that Lord Glenarden had recently quitted that country to fulfil a mission of political importance at some distant court, and that a considerable time must elapse ere an answer could be obtained to the urgent wishes of his son.

“Your grandfather thought (as I have already said) lightly of this delay. Not so Lord Stanmore; his disappointment was severe, his anxiety restless and unmitigable. He expressed unceasingly, and with all the force of his impetuous and overpowering eloquence, an earnest, an almost superstitious desire that the projected marriage should take place immediately, urging the more than unlikelihood of opposition on the part of his family, and the fear that preyed unceasingly upon him, and filled his soul with the wild dread of losing her whom he loved by some unlooked-for casualty.

“In an evil hour he prevailed. Your mother yielded most reluctantly; her proud and sensitive

spirit shrunk from the imputation of indelicacy which a marriage thus engaged in seemed to authorize, but she loved and trusted.

“Count Loredano, who felt his health declining, and saw with a prophetic eye the cloud that was slowly gathering over Venice and already darkening her political horizon, hastened the nuptials of his daughter. I saw your father for the first time on the marriage-day ; he had been described to me as something superior to other men, but when I beheld him, I wondered that new words had not been invented to express the effect of his appearance. There was a charm about it, that seemed the visible result of profound feeling and intellectual light ; a look in his eyes and a smile on his lips that carried enchantment with them. And yet at times the smile was touched with something just not disdainful, and the eyes had almost as much of sorrow in them as of love.

“I know not how I found leisure to make these remarks, for your father’s magnificent exterior, his air at once simple and grand, and his kind and charming manners so completely dazzled me, unused as I was to the society of the noble and the brilliant, that I contemplated him rather as a being of a purer world than as one formed in



man's common mould. Yet sometimes, too, he looked like a rebel angel, whose divine nature had been blurred by the contact of sin and sorrow ; and then again there was a bearing so open, generous, and high-minded, that I blushed at having entertained the injurious idea.

“ It was thus that my imagination,—long since tamed by experience, but then imbued with the high coloring of monastic romance,—dressed up Lord Stanmore's image ; nor could I ever look upon him as one of those downright human beings who work out life with the common implements of mind, batten on its every-day joys, and content with its coarse contrivances. Still it always seemed to me as if some melancholy mystery hung over him. Alas ! a mystery was there, but of a far different kind from that which my young imagination then suggested.

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“ Month after month passed away, and brought no news from England. Apparently the return of Lord Glenarden from his distant mission had been retarded, for he did not write, and every day continental communication became more difficult and interrupted.

“ Your parents were all in the world to each other ; your mother’s gentle breath seemed to your father the atmosphere of heaven, her eyes its light, her voice its music ; the coldness of his family seemed to affect them but little, but Count Loredano felt it deeply ; it festered in his heart. The glory of his life, his joy, his pride, slighted and forgotten ! This was a trick of fate of which no prophetic dream had warned him. His temper, even his heart seemed changed ; he appeared to think your mother culpable in being happy, and often checked the gentle expression of her legitimate love with a coldness bordering on severity.

“ At length a letter arrived from England. Your father opened it eagerly, glanced his eye over it, and immediately withdrew in strong and evident agitation. Your mother trembled, flushed deeply, grew pale, and throwing herself on my bosom, wept as if all her future sufferings had been at that moment revealed to her. When Lord Stanmore rejoined us, the uproar of his soul was still visible on his convulsed features ; grief, anger, indignation, —all the dark and stormy elements were there. But his manner towards your mother ! that was indescribable. It was not mere tenderness, it was

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worship,—the worship, of one who sacrificed to his victim. O, with what a look of pity did he gaze upon her! I could not see that look without tears, and bitterer ones than I had ever shed: the instinct of grief was in them—the certain instinct—that anticipates misfortune with such cruel precision.

“Count Loredano earnestly urged to see the letter, which Lord Stanmore as earnestly desired to withhold, saying in general terms that Lord Glenarden, (not knowing the angel with whom Heaven had blest him,) had expressed some regret at the difference of religion and country. This slight explanation seemed to exasperate the count, who grew frightfully vehement. Antonia, terrified at his violence, entreated her husband to consent, urging in a low and timid voice a natural dread that the agitated feelings of her father might suggest something even worse than the reality. Nothing could he refuse to that sweet voice; so he drew the letter slowly from his bosom, and placed it with the deliberation of despair in the count’s hand.

“I see your mother now as she looked in that trying moment,—her lovely eyes glistening with

grateful affection, her soft form gliding gently from the agitated circle, but pausing to press the hands of your father and of her own as she passed before them. She felt the indelicacy of remaining to hear a discussion which seemed to threaten dissension between those most dear to her, and of which she was herself the subject. I rose to follow her ; but she motioned me to stay, and I remained.

“O, what a scene ensued ! that fatal, fatal letter ! I cannot recollect the whole of its petrifying contents, but parts run thus :—‘ Have you told her all ? and knowing all, has she consented to confide in you ?—she of whose exquisite delicacy, of whose blushing purity your soul seems full ? Has she heard the whole of that dark story ? and—but all this is idle ; she is your wife ! a Catholic, an Italian, a foreigner in country, habits, feelings. Is this as it ought to be, my son ? for you are still my son, though the woman whom you call your wife can never be my daughter—never ! never !—as I hope for future mercy, never ! And more : I swear to strain every nerve, to take advantage of every circumstance (empowering ones exist) to break a marriage abhorrent to my soul. Means

may be found,—you undersand me.' Much more followed in the same strain of indignant violence, mixed with bursts of tenderness, throes of paternal love, struggling with the fury of unbridled passion.

"But Count Loredano,—the wretched father! Pale, speechless, paralysed; the lip contracted, the voice choked, the burning eye-ball! Assuredly when Lord Stanmore placed the dreadful letter in his hands, he must have acted under the influence of temporary insanity; his mind must have been disordered even to madness. There he stood, like the angel of desolation, gazing on the havoc he had made with eyes so full of lurid light, so wild and stormy——But why dwell on this cruel scene? O, that it could be buried with the night that followed it! that both could be effaced for ever from my memory! But no; such things lie too deep in the heart, yet, I would not call up their shadows needlessly.

"At three o'clock your father started from the couch on which he had thrown himself, clasped your mother to his breast with frantic tenderness, and calling wildly, for air, as if his brain were bursting, rushed through the vestibule to the

terrace that overhung the canal. No one dared to follow him. For one long wretched hour your mother remained on her knees before me, covering her head with the folds of my robe, as if she dreaded to hear even a breath drawn. On a sudden she sprang up, and with the blanched cheek, the glazed and fearful eye of one who had seen something that reason dreams not of, conjured me by looks—for she did not speak—to follow her.

“I did so. She advanced rapidly to the front of the balcony that looked down upon the terrace and the deep canal, and stretching her body half over the balustrade, tried to search into the darkness below: but it was all still and colorless. Then putting aside her long hair, which streamed over her face, she listened, crying to me at intervals, ‘Was not that a groan? did you not hear a voice? He calls us! Ah no! it is the wind; how mournfully it howls!’ And then in a tone of agony, ‘God preserve him, what a night is here! Enrico, my beloved, do you not hear me? Ah, he comes! I see the gliding lantern! Holy Mary—blessed mother—praise! praise! It moves, towards us.—No, it is gone!’ Then, as if some

dreadful thought had suddenly struck her, she descended like the lightning's flash to the terrace.

"The dawn was now breaking, a grey and melancholy dawn, feebly scattering the black shadows of night, and showing, but not dispelling, the horrors of darkness. No human sound was heard; all was stirless, soundless, except the water that broke angrily against the gondolas moored at the steps, and the low moaning of the wind. A man slept in one of the boats; we roused and questioned him, but he had neither heard nor seen any thing unusual. Traces of footsteps frequently repeated were visible on the terrace; the same marks were continued down the steps to the edge of the canal; she saw them, and the dreadful idea of suicide instantly presented itself to her mind. A moment more and she would have burst from my feeble grasp, she would have buried herself beneath the waters; but her wild shrieks brought out assistance, and we bore her to a couch, on which she lay for many weeks in an almost helpless state of mental aberration.

"Horrible reports came to us on that fatal day. One who had passed along the canal about the third hour, had heard a groan and then a strange

gurgling, as of some one in the agony of suffocation ; but the wind raved loudly, and there was no light in the heavens, so that he was afraid to stop. Another watched in his boat, and just as the great clock of St. Mark's tolled three, heard a sound as if a heavy weight had been dropped from a height into the canal,—first a loud splash, and then a rushing noise like the gathering of waters closing in suddenly.

“Towards evening, a man arrived at the Palazzo Loredano, bearing a letter addressed to your mother, which had been given to him in charge (as he said) by one who was a stranger to him, and who had hailed his gondola from the steps of the Rialto just before day-break. The boatman had not seen his face, it was muffled in his cloak ; but he had heard his groans, and pitied him. The note was hastily traced with a pencil, and the stranger had, instantly on landing at Mastre, ordered horses for Padua, and departed quickly, urging the utmost speed.

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“Our most pressing dread was now quieted ; and the sounds, of which we had heard with



horrible forebodings, were soon afterwards traced to the last act of a deep domestic tragedy, a dismal deed done that night at Venice.

“Your dear, and most unhappy mother, was not then, nor for a long while after this event, in a state to receive the only consolation of which her wretched fate seemed susceptible,—the certainty of your father’s being still in existence. But when her mind had ceased to wander, when her lips, which since the fatal evening had opened only to breathe wild snatches of old Venetian ditties, or utter cries of despair, spoke again the accents of reason, we gave her the note, and it acted like a talisman on her heart and mind.

“From that moment she looked up with a charmed eye; her dreams were bright, her smile exulting, but her young cheek was bloodless; and as she sat, (it was her custom to do so for hours together,) her head inclined forward as if to catch some distant sound, the lips unclosed, the eye dilated, she looked the chiselled image of melancholy listening to the whispers of hope.

“More letters came; your father had arrived in England, he was again in the home of his

youth, had seen Lord Glenarden, had endured the thunder of his wrath, and yet hoped,—hoped as love does when youth is its companion. Others followed,—less confiding, more agitated, but all expressive of the agony which he felt at being separated from his Antonia.

“At length came one,—fond, mournful, incoherent; it spoke of the solitude of the heart, and the one, the all-effacing misery,—absence! and thus it went on:—‘Dearest of human beings! life-blood of my torn and wretched heart! why art thou not here? When hope is withering within me, I sometimes think that if I could hear my own Antonia speak, or see her sweet eyes looking kindly on me, all might be well. O the joy of seeing thee once more, my wife! my love! But come not, I beseech thee come not! Do not listen to the selfish ravings of despair; stay, my beloved,—remain in the safe asylum of a father’s home, a happy father, who can watch over the child of his love. I too, thy wretched husband, would guard thee, best and dearest, from all evil things guard thee—but it must not be! And yet I love thee, my Antonia, as I devoutly believe man never yet loved woman!’

“A wild and tender farewell followed, a farewell with a whole life of love and sorrow in it; and then again another burst, another intense struggle between an all-engrossing wish, and a feeling of conscious egotism and apprehended evil. One idea alone however presented itself to the mind of your mother, and on that only one she seized with the ardor natural to her character. Her husband wished for her; he suffered, and she was not near to sooth him. Her resolution was instantly taken, and almost as instantly acted on; remonstrance, supplication, the terrors of an angry father's wrath, availed nothing. She went, anticipating sorrow, but strong in the consciousness of strength; heart-struck at leaving an exasperated parent, loved and revered even when he poured down imprecations on her head, still she felt that the duty of a wife was paramount to all others. She asked counsel of her heart, and it said,—‘Go, fond devout woman! go to him whose life hangs on your love. Go and console him, if his grief admits of consolation; and if it does not, share it with him.’ I too would have partaken her danger, have watched, and served, and soothed her; but my father lay upon his death-bed, and a holier

duty even than that of friendship, claimed the exercise of my cares.

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"Seventeen years have passed away since that fair and starlight evening, when in loneliness and sorrow your sweet mother turned from her father's halls, from the proud palace of her ancestors. O that moment of misery! It is still here, (continued Giudetta, pressing her hand to her heart,) it is here for ever! I see her as she lingered on the last step, her face turned upwards to the closed window of her father's chamber; never did human creature look so beautiful, or so wretched! And when at last she entered the gondola, and dropping on her knees blessed him aloud, and waved her hand as if she saw him watching her, good God! how dreadful it was,—and then the sound of the departing oars, lessening mournfully at every stroke until it died away into a death-like silence! Often as I have lain awake at night has that dull and measured sound smote upon my ear, and I have listened to it till I have almost fancied it the death-moan of a suffering spirit.

"Those were dreadful moments, fitting precur-

sors of the melancholy year that followed, and in which the fury of Count Loredano's resentment seemed to gather strength from time. Your mother wrote frequently, and every letter that arrived appeared to augment the mental irritation which was fast destroying him. Not that he ever read them, they were torn to atoms unopened; but the sight of her hand-writings, of the familiar fold, the accustomed seal, produced a praoxysm of rage amounting almost to insanity. Of these letters, two (I afterwards learnt) were addressed to me; but all met with the same fate. One fragment alone fell into my hands: it was deeply sorrowful, touching lightly on the present, adverting often to circumstances mentioned in former letters, lamenting in a tone of bitter grief, but not of accusation, her father's stern silence and utter abandonment,—calling herself the forgotten, and (not remembering that she wrote to another) conjuring him by every thing dear and holy not to continue his resentment,—just, she said, and merited though he might believe it to be towards herself,—to her helpless and unoffending child.

“It was thus, my Antonia, that I first knew of your existence, and my heart swelled within me

when I thought of a being once so caressed, so almost worshipped as your mother was, perhaps alone and full of sorrow, in a foreign land in her hour of danger. The letter did not contain any indication of her place of residence; it was evident that she had mentioned it in others previously,—it was the last that reached us. A second year elapsed, but we heard no more of her. There was a talk at Venice of another wife; wild stories went abroad, and a man—he was of Mantua—came there, who remembered to have seen a stately lady of much-talked-of beauty, who called herself that wife; but more we heard not, and that which we did hear, we disbelieved.

“Three years went by, bringing with them many changes; to me, the loss of both my beloved parents, and to the count the total overthrow of fortune. In the political struggles which convulsed his country, all was submerged. New rulers reigned in Venice, and he, a banished man, gathering together the scanty remnants of his former riches, retired to a humble dwelling on the lonely banks of the Adda; a solitary spot, far removed from any frequented road, and known only to the fishermen and peasants of the neighboring hamlet.

"It was a melancholy exile, but he bore it firmly. Long-continued grief had subdued the sternness of his spirit into an almost childish softness; daily and hourly he dwelt on his harsh conduct towards his daughter, humbling himself to the earth in self-repro-bation. His heart was a well of sorrow, deep and still; but the evils of a revolution, which had reduced him to poverty and blotted out his name from the present records of the land, affected him but little. He resigned himself courageously to a life of severe privation: feeling, perhaps, that misfortune, in which all are equally involved, and in which the personal sentiment of pride finds nothing wounding or exclusive, is easy of endurance. But the grief scars!—they widened daily.

"He went to his cheerless abode, accompanied only by myself and one faithful servant. I could not leave him in his evil fortune,—aged, poor, deeply repentant, and broken down almost to death. In my society alone he seemed to find a little healing for the deep and open wounds of his sad heart. Often have we sat till the moon waned in the heavens, forgetful of the passing hour, while we talked, and wept, and thought of her who was once the joy, the charm, the light of life to us, but who

came no more to cheer us with her voice of love and sweetness. Sometimes a ray of hope,—faint, it is true, as the first pale light of day, but still it was hope,—kindled in our hearts; we thought that Heaven would pity us. But day succeeded day, months lengthened into years, and hope gave way to despondency. And thus we lived, if life that may be called which exists in the past, and has no future!

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“One melancholy evening at the close of autumn, as we sat listening to the wind, and thinking how like its moaning was to the wailing of a woman’s voice, we heard the sound of oars approaching towards the bank on which our cottage stood. The count shuddered; it was an unusual sound at night in our solitude, and one that always affected him deeply. At the same moment, a gust of wind blew open the casement; and while I stood before it securing the fastening, I remarked a boat crossing from the opposite shore. As it neared our bank the rowers rested on their oars, and I observed a dim figure standing upright in it, and extending its arms as if towards the window at



which I stood. The light within the apartment made us distinctly visible to the person in the boat, while they were but faintly seen, and soon quite shrouded in the gathering darkness. I heard the retreating oars, marking (after a minute's silence) the return of the skiff to the opposite shore, and then all was again still.

"This trifling incident affected me profoundly. I had long been accustomed to associate every object with the image of your mother, and this boat, that approached and seemed to stop, and then returned back to the same shore from whence it had a moment before pushed off, appeared to my sensitive and visionary mind, (enfeebled as it was by moody indulgence,) like something mysteriously connected with her sad story. My imagination became strongly affected. All the next day I watched for the return of the boat, but it came not. The evening was wild and stormy, there was thunder in the air, and the red lightning flashed through the casement ; but as night shut in, the fury of the storm died away, and we heard the wind whistling dolefully in the sedges, and the heavy rain-drops falling from the roof.

"Presently the sound of oars came upon us as

we sat by our expiring fire. 'Good God!' (exclaimed the count, in an odd hollow tone,) here is the boat again!' and snatched up a lamp that burned on the table, hurried into his chamber, fastened the door securely within. The superstitious terror with which he was evidently seized, crept into my veins; I remained motionless. Something passed the window,—I thought I saw a human face; I would have screamed, but my voice stiffened in my throat. A soft tapping at the door roused the servant, who sat at work in a corner of the chamber; she looked through the window, and seeing only a single female figure standing within the porch, quitted her work, saying as she left the room, 'It is neighbor Madelaine, who has brought the yarn.'

"I would have prevented her from opening the door, but she was gone. A minute passed; I could have counted it by the audible beatings of my heart. Agata returned with a folded paper in her hand; I thought the woman followed her, and covered my face, crying out, 'For the love of Heaven, bolt the door! Who is it? what is it that stands there?'—'Ah, madam, (she replied,) it is only a poor young woman, who cannot harm

you.'—'A woman!' I exclaimed. 'Yes, madam, and one tired; and sick, and poorly clad, who asks for shelter for the night; and a fearful night it is for a poor Christian woman to stand out side the walls of a fellow-creature's dwelling. But she says you will know her, when you look upon this writing.' Know her! O, my heart had told me all! I did not look upon the paper; I folded her in my arms, I pressed her again and again to my bosom. It was long before I could see, or hear, or speak distinctly; but when I became more collected, when the first rush of joy had subsided, O what a tide of recollections burst upon my heart,—crowding together the past and present, the all that had been and still was of life, in its wild overwhelming sweep!

"It was Antonia! my own Antonia! of this my heart assured me; and yet my eyes still doubted. A woman stood beside me of unusual height, and more than earthly delicacy; her cheek was pale as the first cold flowers of spring; a dark and hollow circle surrounded her melancholy eyes, speaking the language of that deep and settled sorrow that feeds upon the springs of life; her hair no longer floated caressingly on her fair shoulders, but was bound

up closely beneath a nun-like fillet ; there was no freshness in the finely chiselled lips, nor trace of smile upon them.

“All” was changed ! a close brown garment of mean materials covered her whole form, leaving only the face and thin white hands visible. Over that poor dress she had thrown a coarse unseemly cloak, and her head was enveloped in the large white veil worn by the humblest class of Venetian women.

“It was thus that she returned to her father’s house,—she who had eclipsed the brightest, whose smile was distinction, voice a spell, and common words an oracle ! who when she moved, was followed by the obsequious worship of the proudest hearts, on whom eyes gazed with wonder, as if the thing they looked upon was nothing earthly, but some magnificent creation of a more perfect nature ! Poor, poor Antonia ! O, whilst I pressed her cold hands and warmed them within mine, while I dried her long hair, heavy with the rain which had fallen upon it, how my heart dropped blood ! If my tears had not relieved me, I must have died. It was the robe, the scanty robe, that the meanest hireling in her father’s service would

have disdained to wear,—it was that which first made my tears flow. I cannot account for it, perhaps it was childish; but when I saw her altered countenance, I was too much shocked to weep; I gasped for breath, but no tears came; it was that wretched robe, and the contrast—the sad, sad contrast. It said so much; it told of poverty, of distress, in a form of abjectness that——No, even now I cannot associate a thing so sordid with her splendid image.

“All night we sat together, telling sad stories that might have moved the coldest or the happiest mind to pity. Often would she interrupt her heart-breaking narrative, and looking around, exclaim with that utter forgetfulness of self which was always chief jewel in her crown, ‘My dear father,—and is this poor cottage all that is left you? Is this the home of your old age? Ah, my Giudetta, what a wrenching off of comforts! and the friends of his life, how sorely he must miss them!’—‘He misses nothing but his child, (I replied;) and when he has once more blessed her, all will be well.’ Then she would smile, and for a moment her early beauty seemed again to brighten in her eyes.

“O that gleam of the past ! how sad and how sorrowful it is ; that light that will not stay, having no heat to nourish it ; that passes while the eyes which gaze upon it seem to say, ‘Now you are like yourself again ;’ and while the loving heart would fain believe in its sweet countenance, is lost in the mournful permanency of later impressions. That early gleam recalled her days of joyfulness as a portrait does the dead. I could better bear her look of settled sadness ; there was still hope in it, for time mellows the grief that, having passed through all its stages, has no more to dread ; but that smile ! O, so much deeper than tears ! It was like the song of one who had gone mad for love, but remembered the voice that had charmed her---charmed and forsaken !

“At length we retired to rest ; and when the day broke, and that her soft and equal breathing gave me assurance that she slept, I arose, and hastily dressing, awakened a boy who helped in our garden, and with his assistance unmoored a boat, and was soon on my way to a hamlet lower down the river on the opposite bank. There I received you, my second dear Antonia, from the hands of a kind woman, to whose care your mother had

confided you the preceeding evening ; then returning speedily and placing you in her arms, I hastened to prepare Count Loredano's breakfast, already delayed beyond the usual hour.

"When he joined me, his face was pale, his eye wild and hollow. I believe my countenance betrayed my emotion, for he looked earnestly at me ; and then reverting to the incident of the preceding evening, said, ' Did you not hear the oars ? What can that sound mean ? It comes so often, and always in the dead hour.'

" ' It was a fisherman's bark,' I replied, ' from Tremano, that landed a passenger.'

" ' A passenger !' he exclaimed in an agitated tone, ' a woman ?'

" ' Yes, a woman.'

" ' But the night before the same sound came ; who landed then ?'

" ' No one ; she had not courage ; her heart sunk within her ; she went back again.'

" ' She !' he repeated eagerly, and at that moment an old glove that lay upon a table near him caught his eye ; it was the glove of a small female hand, of a foreign make and a peculiar colour. He gazed upon it for a moment, examined the

form minutely, while the blood shifted in his cheek and his whole frame shook like that of one palsied by age, or terror. Then turned to me with a rapid, breathless, expecting look, but checked by a piteous smile—an old man's smile, that said, If I am credulous and weak, forgive it to my age and to my wretchedness, exclaimed, 'It is my child!'

"The next moment she was on her knees before him, and his aged arms enfolded both his children. It was a day of joy and grief, and many followed of the same rainbow coloring. But time passed on, bringing with it calmer moments; the father no longer mourned over the changed form of his child, and again found a world worth living for in her dear society. After having received from me a slight and general outline of the events which had taken place during her absence, he never made another inquiry; but shunning with the vigilant egotism of old age all that could awaken painful reminiscences, seemed to have forgotten the past.

"Your mother, too, began to smile again,—faintly it is true, but with a placid and relying sweetness that seemed to presage future peace. Her eyes lost by degrees the wild glare, the fixed



and hopeless gaze that used to desolate my heart ; a gentle uncomplaining melancholy succeeded to the ghastly restlessness of fresh grief. The hopes of youth, the heart's dream, were blasted for ever ; but the weight of a father's malediction had been removed, [and her beautiful and sincerely believing mind, in which misfortune had served to strengthen faith, found in the consolations of religion, and the sweet exercise of filial and maternal affection, a solace that amounted almost to happiness."

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—VI.—

Thus far, with many interruptions from my tears and sorrow, had Giudetta proceeded in her sad story, when a gentle knocking was heard at the garden gate. She looked through the branches that screened our seat from view, and, perceiving the stranger, pressed her finger to her lips in token of silence, and remained motionless. Ursula and Nanine were both absent, and there was no one to let him in but either Giudetta or myself. After a pause he knocked again less timidly,—waited long,

looked up at the windows often and earnestly, and at length departed with a lingering and interrupted step, stopping at intervals, and looking back towards our house, as he used to do in the vineyard pathway at Genoa.

"I shall see him this evening," said Giudetta, "for it is absolutely necessary that we should have an explanation; but at this moment, I feel my spirits too much agitated to enter upon any other subject than the sad one which has recently occupied us. I have found out where he is staying at Paris, and learn that it is his intention to remain for some time." I heard this with surprise, knowing that she was unaware of his being in our neighborhood until my note had informed her of it. But affection is ever vigilant, and in this short interval she had ascertained all that it was essential to her to know.

We sat down again under the acacias, and Giudetta took up the thread of her melancholy story:

"I would not needlessly afflict you, my Antonia, (she said,) by dwelling too minutely on the details of your mother's sufferings while in England, but it is necessary that you should learn something of the circumstances to which she became a victim.

"It is with real sorrow, with intense regret, that I withdraw the veil from the errors of a man who bore upon him the majestic impress of virtue ; who might have been high amongst the highest of the endowed, had he exerted the eminent privilege of an enlightened mind, the great one of example, but who from one sole error became a warning, a strong and melancholy illustration of the evils which may result from a single act of duplicity. From the moment that we have stooped to it, we are no longer free ; the dread of discovery pursues us like a spectre ; the footstep is always behind, the startling hand touches the shoulder ; we shake it off—start forward—grow bold again, and as we do so, feel the breath upon our cheek, and shiver while we expect the word to follow it.

"When Lord Stanmore first beheld your mother, he held in his heart a secret that weighed heavily upon it, and that (fatally for his honor and their mutual happiness) he wanted courage to reveal. He who in all else was open as the light of day, in one instance was criminally secret. The unsullied purity of your mother's mind, on whose fair tablet the world had made no mark, her sensitive delicacy and ignorance of evil, startled him. He feared

that a disclosure might utterly blast his hopes, and suffered (strange inconsistency of man's nature) a careering passion to roll over and overwhelm his naturally high sense of honor; weakly thinking that when she was his own, she would know his heart so thoroughly, that her's would forgive a silence not persevered in to cloak dishonor, but to conceal unmerited misfortune. Fatal delusion! faulty and perverse concealment! Who that has once deceived—whatever may be the extenuating circumstances—can ever hope to re-inspire the sentiment of perfect uninquiring confidence?

“The blandishments of beauty, and a father's influence, had combined to hurry Lord Stanmore into an ill-fated marriage before his heart had spoken, or his mind judged. The Lady Almeria Cleveland, then the supreme beauty of the English court, was by a few years his senior, and would certainly never have been the object of his unbiassed choice. But the ambitious and grasping nature of Lord Glenarden found in this alliance a powerful connexion, and immense wealth; and his son learned after a short but bitter experience, that he had paid too high a price for their acquisition,—no less than all his hopes of future happiness.

“His bride was cold, vain, and heartless; with feelings, habits, and impressions entirely at variance with those of her husband, whose high pursuits and home tastes she derided and opposed. She was (and piqued herself on being) a creature of impulse—of bad impulse, passing with unbounded feet over all authorized limits, and finding right where others saw audacity. To a lofty and sensitive nature, eminently endowed, her conduct was intensely painful. Lord Stanmore tried to work upon her heart, but he could not make it speak, there was no sound in it;—upon her pride, but that was unfenced by principle, and where the latter is not deeply rooted, all other safeguards are but ramparts of air.

“To be brief, she proved herself unworthy, altogether unworthy, of bearing an honorable name; she abandoned her husband and her country, and fled,—none knew whether. Your father, stung to the quick, buried himself in solitude while the customary proceedings were instituted for dissolving his ill-fated marriage. But it is unnecessary to dwell on this subject; your father found himself free by the laws of his country, and restoring to Lady Almeria the splendid fortune

he had received with her, crossed the sea and sought in foreign travel the oblivion of his domestic misfortunes.

“It was deemed singular, at the time, that Lord Glenarden had never shared warmly in the just indignation of his son, but continued, as far as decency allowed, to favor the lost and degraded lady. But his ruling passions, avarice and ambition, were both thwarted ; and he angrily regretted the restitution of her fortune and the loss of that influence which his connexion with a family, then the most powerful in the state, had given him.

“Your father journeyed on, now courting man, and now avoiding him ; seeking sometimes in society, but oftener in solitude, a balm for his bruised spirit. At length he came to Venice, and there, at the season of the carnival, saw your mother at a masque held at the Manfrini palace. It was just as day broke, just as the early dawn looked in as if to shame all artificial beauty, that she passed him fresh and blushing like the dewy light of morning,—her soft rich robe touching the edge of the gondola, as she stepped from the marble peron on its velvet pillows, her head

inclined gracefully backwards to catch the playful salute of a girlish hand that waved to her from the illuminated balcony. Never (Lord Stanmore used to say) did the rich fancy of the ancient painters imagine any thing so beautiful as Antonia at that moment ; never did lovelier nymph strew flowers before the chariot of Aurora.

“ You know the rest. Until the fatal day when Lord Glenarden’s cruel letter separated those true hearts, Lord Stanmore, aware of his wife’s departure from Venice, received her as she landed in England, and in that meeting—that happy, happy meeting, all past sorrow, all future danger were forgotten. Your parents retired to a forest solitude, a hunting-lodge in a green and lonely spot, where your mother remained in voluntary seclusion, not wishing to appear in the world till her marriage had received the sanction of Lord Glenarden’s approval.

“ Your father, on the contrary, proud of his bright possession, at first urged her to let herself be seen, and seemed assured that even the stern repugnance of Lord Glenarden must give way before the majesty of innocence and beauty ; but too full of the sentiment of present happiness to

overcloud it by an opposing feeling, yielded to her gentle remonstrances.

“It was during this period of short-lived peace, and while your parents, together in their forest Eden, envied not the bright prosperities of that gayer world, whose distant hum scarcely reached their far-off solitude, that you, my Antonia, were born; and while your mother pressed you to her bosom, all sorrow seemed forgotten in the profound and absorbing tenderness of her new emotions.

“Yet she was not happy; blest in her husband's love, and in the soft exercise of her newly-awakened maternal cares, still her father's wrath hung like a deadly load upon her. Nor was that her sole affliction; she had another cause of sorrow. Her husband became daily more pre-occupied and thoughtful; some secret anxiety gnawed at his heart, and there were unguarded moments when the workings of his mind were painfully visible through the assumed veil of a feverish artificial gaiety. Something lay deeper than his father's anger, for of that he spoke openly, and often indignantly, as unjust and pitiless; but there was a wound beneath, a something that



refused to reveal itself even to the ear of tried and devoted affection.

“Letters arrived which he concealed from her ; of this she became accidentally aware. But knowing that circumstances might arise in the course of a correspondence with his family, which from motives of delicacy towards her he would naturally desire to suppress, she felt no distrust ; and when he one day told her in a fluttering voice that he must leave her for a little while, no suspicion arose in her mind, nothing struck upon her heart but the thought of his absence.

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“One day,—it was in the third week after Lord Stanmore’s departure, as she sat in her chamber thinking on his long and unaccounted-for delay, and fondly tracing through the forest openings the path which he had taken when he left her, a stranger rang at the gate, and demanded admittance. It was refused ; Lord Stanmore (the servant said) was absent, and his lady did not receive visitors. The stranger was importunate, urged business of the most pressing kind, and at length succeeded. Your mother was (as she has since

told me) offended at the intrusion, and bowed coldly on his entrance, but as he advanced towards her, was suddenly struck by the resemblance which he bore to her husband; while he, starting back in obvious amazement, (surprised no doubt at her unimaginable beauty,) uttered an exclamation suddenly suppressed, and sat down unasked beside her.

“In the scene that followed,—perhaps the most trying to which a fond and true heart could be exposed,—heaven no doubt sustained her, for mere mortal energy could not have done it. She heard of your father’s former marriage, but that was a misfortune, not a crime: she heard of his duplicity, and yet sunk not, though her heart was almost torn asunder: she heard that Lady Almeria had returned to England, loudly declaring her innocence, and furnished with abundant evidence to prove it, and invalidate the decree of divorce,—heard it from the father of her husband, and yet outlived the deadly intelligence!

“Heartless and wicked man! who could coldly lacerate so gentle a bosom, could see the agonies of a creature so young, so beautiful, so utterly forelorn, and still stab on. A burning fever, a

long delirium, succeeded by a slow and painful convalescence, followed this dreadful interview. It was three months before Antonia's senses were restored: melancholy restoration! Her first thought was of her husband, her heart had already forgiven his deception; she inquired eagerly, for him, asked if he had not watched by her in her delirium,—knew that he had, for she had felt the pressure of his hand, and remembered that his tears had fallen on her cheek,—then thought it might be an illusion: but no answer came from those about her; a gesture of pity, a perplexed and evading look, but no reply, not one consoling word.

“At length her attendant put into her hands a letter dated a month before. I have preserved it with other papers of your mother's. Here it is; I will read it for you: ‘My most beloved Antonia—my wronged angel,—how shall I write it? All is over! we are separated for ever! Her claim is established, falsely but irreversibly established! And I, the acknowledged husband of another, can I—ought I—to hope that the wife of my heart, my pure and virtuous—my only loved one, should receive in secret the homage which the proudest heart might call it glory to offer? No, my beloved,

I dare not—would not ask it. Return to make your father's home an earthly paradise,—go, angelic creature! Go, and be a bright example to the other dear Antonia, who must, alas! now look to you alone for protection; and O, forgive the wretch to whose miserable egotism you have been made the victim,—forgive him for the sake of the passionate love he bears you; forgive—and do I live to write it!—forget him,—speedily, and for ever! Giuseppe and Caterina are faithful servants; suffer them to attend you. Farewell, most dear, most injured woman! I dare not bless, thee, but Heaven will!

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“But these sad details affect you, my Antonia, too bitterly. I shall pass over all that your mother felt, and thought, and suffered on reading this specious and heartless letter, evidently, even to her unsuspecting mind, motivated by the base desire of shaking off the unhappy creature who had ventured all on the false promise of his love. And yet how infinitely noble in mind, how deeply devoted in heart, had he always seemed! No, she could not, would not credit even the evidence of his own

words ; she questioned all who were about her, and at last left herself without even the melancholy consolation of uncertainty, without even the shadow of a doubt to cling to.

“Once convinced, her high spirit rose up indignantly against oppression ; and after the bitter pang, the grief of griefs, that of being forced to think him worthless in whose virtues she had glorified, of finding coldness and dishonor where she had most fondly loved and most confidently trusted,—she recovered all her natural elevation of character and strength of mind, and prepared to execute the plan which she had decided upon immediately on awakening from the stunning effects of Lord Stanmore’s desertion.

“Her first intention was to quit her husband’s house openly, taking with her nothing of all the gorgeous baubles which his lavish fondness had bestowed upon her, except her marriage ring and a chain of gold, the first gift of wedded tenderness ; but she had scarcely formed her plan, when a circumstance, apparently trifling, occurred, which awakened a doubt in her mind as to her personal freedom. Fear quickened her attention, and she soon ascertained that her movements were watched,

and that the domestics especially recommended by Lord Stanmore were placed as spies upon her.

“It was unfortunate that Count Loreilano, in a moment of high excitement, should have denied to his forlorn daughter, when she left her home at Venice, the attendance of a faithful servant ; but it was his will that none should bear her company in her cheerless pilgrimage, and she, desirous to show in all things not militating against her duty as a wife, her high sense of paternal right, went her way alone : and alone in the sternest sense of the word she now felt herself, standing as she did in the midst of enemies, with no one near from whom to take counsel or hope for assistance, entirely unacquainted with the country, and yet without any chance of safety but in secret and immediate flight. But she trusted in Providence, and means were given her.

“It so fell out that one day, as your mother sat at the foot of a tree, concealed by the brush-wood that grew about it, and musing mournfully on her unhappy fate, she heard the footsteps of persons approaching. They seemed in earnest conversation, and as they drew near, believing themselves unobserved, Giuseppe (it was his voice) said to

Caterina, 'You are certain that she is safe in her chamber?'

" 'Certain; she lulls the babe to sleep.'

" 'We have lost time,' he continued. 'My lord will be here on the eleventh; and if she be not by that time over the seas and on her way to the mountains, we lose our reward.'

" 'God help her!' returned the woman, in a tone of voice that had a touch of pity in it; 'Heaven help her when she misses the child! But we must do our duty; yet I wish it had not been a convent, and that solitary one! Why not send her to \_\_\_\_\_' Here the voices were lost in distance, and the speakers, striking off through a path that led to a neighboring hamlet, were soon out of sight.

" 'Confirmed now in the worst fears, Antonia returned homewards quickly and silently, and gained her chamber unseen. She lost no time in vague meditation; her religious principles were strong and true, and from their pure source she drew the hope which sustained, and the mental courage which directed her. To depart that night,—even though compelled to trust herself alone to the host of alarming chances that rose up in drear array before, was her instant decision.

Yet when she thought of being cast out in a strange land, in the darkness of night, and on an unknown road, her heart quailed; but the appalling alternative! that,—and above all, her trust in God,—gave her fresh strength.

“Close to your cradle sat a young female, who had been recently takenly into the family to assist your mother in her nursery cares, and whose rustic manner and sheer simplicity were the scorn and ridicule of the more accomplished domestics. Your mother, who was kind to all who needed kindness, favored the poor girl; first, because she pitied her, and next, because there was something of acuteness in her despised simplicity that amused, and of feeling in her countenance that interested her.

“As she sat revolving the chances of escape that presented themselves, a gold ring of little value fell from her finger. Jenny picked it up, admiring its beauty as she replaced it.

“‘You may keep it,’ said your mother; ‘it will remind you of me when I am gone.’

Jenny took the ring with a curtsy of grateful acknowledgment: then, suddenly approaching your mother, as if to hear more distinctly, said, ‘But you are not going to leave us, madam?’



“ ‘It is possible, Jenny, that I may soon return to my own country.’

“ ‘And shall we never see you again, madam?’

“ ‘Probably never.’

“At these words the poor girl burst into tears and seizing your mother’s hand, exclaimed, ‘Dear lady—dear mistress,—do not be offended—but—but—I shall never be happy when you are gone. Every one here hates me, and you are so kind—so good! Take me with you; only let me be near you, I will serve you on my knees—I will follow you to the end of the world. Do not, do not leave me behind you!’

“Your mother, touched by this burst of affection, paused a moment. Unaccustomed of late to the language of the heart, the vehement tenderness of the poor girl’s manner affected her sensibility; it seemed as if Providence had suddenly raised up a friend for her in her necessity;—in short, in her forlorn situation, no other choice seemed left to her but to confide in one, whose kindness of heart and shrewd good sense promised the sort of assistance of which she stood most in need. Jenny had a brother,—an honest youth; they were orphans, and clung together fondly, having none else to

hold by. The boy was older than his sister, and had been often in London on business of his master's who was a tradesman in a neighboring town. He happened to have called that morning, and was still in the house ; his assistance was easily procured and most heartily rendered, and the best arrangements of which the urgency of circumstances admitted, were instantly made.

“In a conversation which your mother held with Caterina and Giuseppe in the course of the evening, she feigned (hard task for her) to fall into their snare; and it was decided between them, that on the next day but one she was to commence her journey,—to Venice they said; but the lonely mountains, the convent in the desert, the deaf wails beyond which neither cry or call could pierce, and above all the child!—the abducted child! rose on her shuddering mind and strengthened it to the unusual exercise of deception. The cunning agents of a diabolical plot were over-matched by the instinct of despair; no suspicion crossed their minds, or ruffled the crouching boldness with which their services were proffered. She would be safe (they said) under their respectful protection,—safe in their devoted attachment;

and then with many obsequious protestations they left her, as they imagined, to repose.

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“An hour after nightfall, your mother, attended by Jenny and bearing you asleep in her arms, descended on tiptoe from her chamber; and passing through a lateral door, the key of which she had contrived—at an alarming risk—to secrete, glided swiftly and silently into a rough wood-path rarely traversed. It was a winding track, obstructed in many parts by long tangled grass, or wild-growing briars; but Jenny, who in the days of her idle childhood used to gather berries there, and knew every branch that bore a nut, and every tree in whose shade the wood-strawberry nestled, led on fearlessly.

“The night was dark and still; a few stars glimmered in the heavens, shedding a dim cold gleam—if such it could be called—through the opening branches; but for the quick breath, the hurried footstep, all would have been silent as death itself. And once a nightingale, that kept her lonely vigil on a high spray, sung out wildly; your mother started, and felt as if the sound was

ominous of sorrow,—the bird, alarmed by the fall of footsteps, hushed its loud girgle and fled into the thicket. Antonia had felt the silence of the forest, coupled as it was with almost total darkness, as something fearful; but that only sound, that unaccompanied voice, breaking the chilly stillness of night, O, how its solitary cry sunk into her heart!

“After winding for a considerable time along the forest track, they arrived at a meadow terminating in a low plantation, from which a gate opened on a spot where three roads joined. Stationed in the least frequented of these roads, and some hundred paces from the gate, was the carriage which waited to convey your mother from her prison-house,—her Eden once! A high fence divided the meadow from the road, and they crept slowly along under its shade, hidden by the wild vegetation that overhung it. On a sudden, Jenny stopped, looked back, and stifling an exclamation of terror, pointed to the house now visible on its lone eminence above the intervening forest. Your mother’s eyes followed the indication, and beheld with dread unspeakable, a rapid and unusual movement. Light appeared suddenly in one

window, and the next moment shifted to another ; then the whole front seemed illuminated—torches glared through the trees—cries were heard—then footsteps nearer and nearer ; in a moment the forest seemed surrounded—girdled round with light—and echoing to the shouts of many voices. The poor hunted creatures lay down, crouching under the flimsy covering of the brambles that grew about them, trying to hide themselves from the blaze of the torches that now flared around, and threatened to lay open their insecure refuge. No doubt their terrors magnified the numbers, but there seemed a legion ; and one, (it was Giuseppe,) whose treacherous eyes glanced every where, seemed to have caught a glimpse of some unguarded movement, for he turned half round towards their hidingplace, and Jenny thought he motioned to a man who stood near him.

“ At this moment you uttered a feeble cry ; fatal it must have been had not the sound of carriage-wheels rolling rapidly onwards instantly turned the pursuit into another channel. Fortunate chance ! Within that carriage was no doubt one who had also cause for haste, for the horses shot forward as if life or death hung on their

speed, striking fire from their flying hoofs, and passing like the whirl of an arrow.

"In a moment all had vanished; silence and increased darkness spread again over the forest. Your mother started on her feet and fled; Jenny darted swiftly after her. They ran like deer chased by the hunters; but the human hounds had followed in another track, and the poor fugitives, half dead and speechless from terror, at length reached the carriage posted to receive them.

"Their route was obscure and circuitous; their horses fleet; the other carriage—the spectre one your mother used to call it—had taken an opposite direction. All was propitious; it was early spring and they had still the advantage of a long night before them. Nothing farther obstructed their flight, and before morning they found themselves hidden in the populous obscurity of London.

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"The humble lodging to which your mother was directed by the brother of Jenny, answered perfectly the purposes of concealment; and the honest master of the house was of essential service to her in the disposal of a watch of considerable

value, and some rich and curious trinkets that had belonged to her in her maiden days, and for which he was fortunate enough to find a liberal purchaser.

“Circumstances rendered it necessary to make this person in some degree acquainted with your mother's story ; and he advised her remaining for a short time concealed in London, and then taking a passage in a vessel bound to some Italian port of the Mediterranean, instead of embarking directly for Venice, which could scarcely fail of exposing her to discovery. The advice seemed too reasonable to be rejected, and after remaining for a short time hidden in London, she, with yourself and the excellent Jenny, quitted the country of your birth and the scene of her sufferings.

“Many were the sorrows which the poor Antonia endured in the two long, hopeless years that followed. The ship was wrecked off St. Remo, on the coast of Genoa, and she, with the two companions of her darkening fate, were with difficulty rescued from the devouring element. Some pious sisters of charity sheltered and nursed them with unwearied tenderness ; but a consuming sickness wasted Antonia's strength, and it was long before

she could again pursue her uncheered and tedious journey.

“And then came the saddest sorrow of all that had fallen upon her in that melancholy pilgrimage,—the loss of her dear and faithful Jenny. The fellowship that had soothed, the courage that had supported her, were withdrawn for ever; there was none now who could understand, who could remember with her; no heart that loved her for her sorrows, or that she could love for its sympathy.

“It was at Genoa that the spirit of that affectionate and noble-minded woman was recalled. She expired in the arms of your deeply afflicted mother, resigned to die, but yet wishing to live while her life could be useful to her dear and blessed mistress, as she called her with her dying breath. She was the friend of whom Antonia has often spoken to you with tears, and the flat grey stone close to the tomb of your mother covers her mortal remains; a rose-tree grows beside it. When we came together to Genoa, some years after poor Jenny’s death, Antonia planted it; and every year when the leaves fell, she gathered and placed them in her bosom, wearing them till the returning season had brought back fresh ones.



“At Genoa she disposed of a chain of gold of remarkable weight and workmanship; it had been a present from her husband in the happy days of their early love, the only memorial she had retained of the fond care with which he delighted to decorate his idol, and she wept when she parted with it, cruel as he had been.

“Italy was then in a wild state of war and tumult; and when your mother at length reached Venice a lonely pilgrim, faint and heart broken, she found a foreign enemy in possession of the city, her home abandoned to strangers, her friends scattered abroad in foreign lands, her father exiled, none knew where. The misery of utter loneliness was on her in her natural home, in the thronged streets of her native city; she sank into an obscure asylum suited to her poor fortune, and there hiding herself from the chance of meeting those who had known her on her bright eminence, turned all her thoughts towards the means of discovering the place of her father's exile.

“But he was ruined and forgotten. No one recollected when, or where he had gone; and it was not till after many months of earnest but unavailing inquiry, and in an awful moment, when her

resources were utterly exhausted, that as she sat despairingly, holding you in her arms, on a stone by the river side, near to the poor hut in which she had hidden herself, that a boy who went about the country hawking his rude wares from door to door, offered a bird-cage to her for sale. It had been given to him, (he said,) in exchange for some more useful article, in a cottage many miles up the river. Your mother's heart rose in her throat; the cage had been mine; she knew it by its peculiar form, and by the letters G. M. engraved on a small plate inserted in it. The boy, surprised at her agitation, speedily answered her rapid, breathless questions. A straw is enough for hope to catch at; and that night she was on her way to our lone hut, her desolated heart once more rejoicing as the long-estranged feeling of hope gathered strength within it.

“She took the boy for her guide, giving him the last coin she possessed for his trouble; and seating you on the poor subdued beast which carried his merchandise, walked slowly by your side. But her strength was much enfeebled, and she was often obliged to sit down by the road-side to rest; so that the first evening they were still, at twilight

hour, something more than a league from the hut where they intended to repose for the night.

"There was a fountain by the way-side which, though broken and defaced, had once been of beautiful form and most delicate sculpture ; but nature had outlived art, and the water still fell in broad silvery sheets from the marble fragments on the herbs that grew below it. Antonia's feet were blistered and weary, so she sat down upon a stone thinking to bathe them in the falling stream ; and while she did so, sad thoughts crossed her mind, and for the first time something like a repining feeling mingled with them. For a moment she forgot the father who an instant before had occupied all her thoughts, the child who slept beside her ; and thinking only of her husband, wept bitterly, calling herself the most forlorn of creatures.

"Thus mourning, she perceived a woman wraped in a dark garment, her face covered with the folds of her white head-cloth, who sat upon the ground at some distance. Antonia moved farther off, fearing to intrude on her seclusion, but the woman's groans and frequent ejaculations affected and disturbed her. She would have spoken to, and comforted her, had there not been something in her

look which, as she sat gathered up within her garments, seemed to forbid approach. Your mother staid some time, and then, having first dried her feet, knelt down—as was her custom at close of evening—to pray. No sooner had she done this, than the woman, rising from the ground, advanced and stood before her ; your mother felt chilled, but bent her head lower, and continued her prayer. When she had finished, she rose up and would have passed on, but the woman spoke to her, and she remained.

“‘You have had sorrow,’ she said, while her eyes searched into her, ‘but I despair ! You pray ; I cannot. You believe ; I doubt,—doubt ! (she continued in a wild shrieking voice,) O that I could even doubt ! If there was no death, I might smile gaily ; but can my golden fillets, my gemmed robes, keep him off ? Can they hide me from him who lifts up the purple curtains of king’s tents, though the men with spears, and the men with battle-axes guard the entrance ?’

“Antonia shuddered, but pity mastered horror ; and taking the woman by the hand, she drew her to the brink of the fountain, and they sat down together. There was a long pause, and while it

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lasted, she contemplated the person beside her. It was not, as she had at first thought, a female of the country, but one obviously, by her look and speech, a stranger. Her dark robe was of costly cloth, and her thick white veil of exceeding fineness; she wore rings of value on her bare hands,—not as if she esteemed such things, but as if they made part of her habitual wear; her hands were nobly shaped, but thin and veiny, like those of an aged person, though her face bespoke one of more care than years. It was pale and marble, yet traces of beauty were still there,—a severe and gloomy beauty, into which bad things had worked themselves, things that Antonia read shudderingly.

“‘You believe!’ she repeated, starting as if from some dark thought. ‘Happy, happy wretch! for the world calls you wretched. I know it; I read it on your young, sad brow. But the world knows nothing; it has not heard of me, it has not heard of her for whom there is no hereafter,—of her to whom the universe is a machine without a Maker,—of her who dreams desolate dreams of howling souls, seeking in dread and darkness, midst rattling bones and foul corruption, the creator that is not.’

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“ Antonia started ; her eyes shrunk from the wild ones that pursued her. But when she remembered that it was a woman who spoke thus,—perhaps a friendless one,—tears of compassion gathered in them.

“ ‘ A blessing on your tears, (she cried,) they are for me. Thank you—thank you, poor thing ; for you have your own woes too, they are written in your sad eyes ; but look at mine, they are dry. Hear my words, (and she wrung your mother’s hands in hers,) there is more joy in the grief of the believer, than in the unforeseeing lightness of the heart into whose void nothing sufficing enters. The one looks through the bars of his prison, sees the light of the sun, and feels its warmth ; the other holds up a lantern to the walls of his cell, and reads what the scoffer has written on them. I am that last, (she added, with a look of profound despair) ; I am the unbeliever, to whom all is darkness,—darkness with the terrible gleam in it.’

“ Antonia tried to speak, to say, ‘ Let us kneel and pray together,—God will hear us.’ But she exclaimed wildly,—catching the first words, ‘ Kneel and pray ! I with the innocent ! O no ! I too was innocent, but the sacredness of belief was never

with me ; and now nothing is with me but despair, —that never leaves me. O that I could die, and be like the earth I tread upon !

“ Antonia’s tears flowed again. She would have spoken, but the woman rose up solemnly, and laying her hand upon her, said, ‘ Whatever may be your griefs, there is a hope beyond them ; pray, and be comforted, and if your earthly heart should repine at sorrow, think of me.’ And then gliding through a narrow gate close to the fountain, which your mother had not before observed, fastened it carefully and was seen no more.

“ The impression which this incident made on your mother’s mind was deep and lasting ; her heart filled with compassion for the unhappy person from whose intense despair she had received a lesson of resignation and of gratitude. She too went her way, and entering the first church that she saw open, gave thanks devoutly for the blessings that still were left with her, and bearing joyfully the cross of her faith, departed comforted.

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“ Your grandfather lived four years after the return of his child, and then died gently in her

arms. We buried him in the cemetery of our village, and wept long and sorrowfully over his grave. Our home seemed sad to us; we saw him every where, and yet he was not with us. It is thus that the heart feels before time has convinced us of the reality of death; so having much to renew sorrow, and nothing now to love in our sad home, we went up into the Appenines, and lived there amongst the shepherds of the mountains.

“Count Loredano had left a little behind him; and a friend,—faithful to my evil fortunes, a kind relation of my father’s, contrived to transmit to me, even in the most perilous times, a portion of the modest income which my parents had bequeathed me. It was more than enough for our wants, and was soon afterwards augmented by a successful speculation, in which the same friend had engaged with a view to my advantage.

“It was there, in that sky and mountain solitude, as we sat and mused upon the story of the past, while the sun went down and the soft wind brought to us at intervals the rude music of the shepherds from the crags above, that a strange thought crossed my mind. I remember well the hour, the light, the delicious coloring of the



heavens and of the earth on that sweet evening ; and the fair and sorrowful creature who sat beside me, telling of heart-breaking gone-by things with the voice of an angel, and the look of one whose heavenly nature had forgiven all human injuries, but who still loved. She talked of that forest glade where she had often wandered with her husband,—of their embowered solitude where they had dwelt in happy companionship with the birds and flowers, and remembered how beautiful it looked when the level beams of a setting Sun glanced through the interwoven trees, throwing forward their long cool shadows, and darkening the fresh turf with their living mosaic. And then she spoke of him whom she had loved so tenderly, of him who had forsaken her, of him whom she could never forget. Alas ! the heart never forgets if it has once felt deeply ; the impression may be weakened, but can never be utterly effaced.

“But this thought of mine,—it had never come to me before ; yet I had admired your father as a glorious creature, who seemed lifted by his high nature above all evil influence, and when it rose on my mind the wonder seemed that it should have awakened so tardily. I asked to see the letter

which had almost broken your mother's heart, the last false, cruel letter. I examined it minutely, pored over every touch and turn of the writing, compared it with many others that she had preserved of his, and felt the immediate conviction that he had never written it, and that it was a base and iniquitous fabrication, got up for the purpose of separating the unhappy Antonia from her legitimate protector.

"The whole truth flashed at once on the mind of your mother. Her husband had been betrayed, duped, made wretched as herself, but he was guiltless! and she dropped on her knees in the ecstasy of a redeemed soul,—her hands clasped, her eyes full of supernatural lustre, thanking heaven for having manifested his innocence, and then weeping bitterly, and wildly upbraiding herself for having ever been induced to doubt it.

"And now came a thousand recollections, thickening into proofs as we dwelt upon them; so we embraced each other as if life had just opened freshly on us, and leaving our mountains, descended joyfully into the valleys, and soon found means of reaching Genoa.

"It was our intention to have embarked there

for England, and to have at once sought out and undeceived your father. We had arranged the means of remaining unknown until circumstances favored the developement of our plan, and your sweet mother, who had always doated on you, now began to glory in your beauty, and to dwell trustingly upon the anticipated joy of seeing you pressed to your father's heart. But it was not to be ; and she, the best and purest of human beings, seemed to have been lent to earth as a testimony to us unjust repiners of a world beyond the grave,—a bright, a happy, a repaying world, and to strengthen by her mental martyrdom our immortal hopes, and intimate reliance on divine justice.

“It happened that when we arrived at Genoa, an English vessel had just completed her preparations for departure, and as the captain expected to sail in a few hours, I went on board to secure berths. While I waited in the cabin, a newspaper that lay upon the table attracted my attention ; I took it up, and the first intelligence that met my eyes was the death of Lord Stanmore, son of the Earl of Glenarden ! A gentleman present heard my scream of horror, and confirmed the dreadful intelligence ; he had left England but a short time

before, and had been present at Lord Stanmore's funeral.

"I heard no more;—all was now over! our last hope, that which we had fondly dwelt on, was gone like all the rest which our poor hearts had cherished. It was your mother's death-blow;—she never hoped again! and though she survived the cruel shock nearly five years, yet the stroke that broke her heart, fell upon it in that desolating moment."

Giudetta had little more to add to her heart-rending story. I knew the rest too well; but I did not know that my beloved mother, had ever, after the fatal crisis of her misery, been haunted by the dread of Lord Glenarden's getting me into his power. There seemed no motive for his doing so, but her maternal anxiety created many. For the purpose of concealment she changed her name, calling herself Madame de Vaudreuil, the widow of a French officer, while Giudetta, who had caught the contagion of her fears, passed for her sister under the appellation of Mademoiselle Delmont; and then feeling her strength decline, and her reluctance to change of place increase to a painful sensation of alarm at the idea of movement,

and having no farther wish on earth but to bring me up in virtuous obscurity, she remained at Genoa, settling in the most retired spot of an unfrequented quarter, and never passing the precincts of our small garden except for the observance of her religious duties ; and then she chose such hours as ensured the absence of the stranger, the curious, or the devout of a higher class than the neighbors who surrounded us.

But the rest—the last sad close, how shall I speak of it ? Even now I cannot bear to think of the death-bed, the blessing, and the last—last kiss ! and how we followed her—who had looked at, had spoken to us, had loved us with her dear warm heart but three days before—to the dark and silent tomb, and left her there alone,—and returned to miss her in her accustomed haunts,—and to be alone ourselves. I cannot—years have gone by, but I cannot dwell upon it.

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—VII.—

Giudetta described to me, when I was sufficiently composed to listen, the uneasiness which

she had felt at finding me, on the vigil of the Assumption, in the company of a stranger; and how her heart had sunk when she discovered that this stranger was an Englishman. But other and more substantially grounded fears had quickly obliterated the growing anxiety.

It chanced, that on that very evening Giudetta had gone to visit a woman who lay ill in a distant quarter of the city; and while she staid with her, many who were passing that way stopped to take refreshment, the house being one of humble entertainment for poor travellers. Amongst others were two men who, as Giudetta was departing, sat on a bench beside the poor gossiping of Venice. And one who was just arrived from thence, spoke of two Englishmen, then the talk of the moment; they had been to Padua, and to Brescia and Pesaro, and other towns, inquiring earnestly and unceasingly for the daughter of the old Count Loredano, and giving money to those who feigned to know something of her. The man's companion wished that he could share in the spoils, and the other devoutly joining in word and spirit, rose and departed.

A channel of communication with Venice was

still open to Giudetta; she took advantage of it, and soon learned that the stranger, whose conduct had occasioned so many rumors, called himself Lord Glenarden. She looked about for the immediate means of placing me in safe concealment, when she received the intelligence that the elder traveller had taken the route to Bologna. As to his companion, he had suddenly disappeared, and was then (it was supposed) in the neighborhood of Genoa. This intelligence precipitated our departure; Giudetta's preparations had long been made, and on the day when her protracted absence had excited my surprise, she had settled for our passage with the master of the Marseilles trader, and made the final arrangements for quitting Genoa on the ensuing night. Matters of business relative to the employment of her limited fortune, together with the privacy to be found in a great capital, where her motives for going to Paris, and remaining there.

It seemed as if my friend had now discolsed every thing to me, and yet there was a something still lurking behind. I saw it clearly, but dared not question her,—dared not, because it seemed to me that he whom we called the stranger was con-

cerned in it. She had already talked of the necessity of seeing him again, and had tried to recall his features, asking me if I had remarked the color of his eyes and hair; then suddenly exclaimed, as if carried by some urgent apprehension out of her usual prudence, "Heavens, if it should be so!" In the evening she wrote a few lines, and giving them herself to a trusty messenger, waited his return in evident anxiety. At length he arrived, and with the unexpected intelligence that the Englishman was gone; a letter had been delivered to him in the afternoon, which he had no sooner read, than ordering horses he had hastily quitted Paris.

Giudetta was surprised and evidently affected, but whether painful or otherwise I could not discover. It seemed to me that a kind of doubtful expression, a rainbow chequering of satisfaction and disappointment, lightened and clouded in her eyes; but whatever she may have felt, nothing betrayed itself by words. For myself, I heard that he was gone with a pang of sorrow that startled and alarmed me, for it told too truly the secret of my soul; it was a deep and poignant sorrow, an unlooked-for grief. I tried to conceal my emotion with that bashful secrecy with which



the young heart hides a first feeling, as though it were a base one ; while Giudetta talked of other things, and studiously avoided noticing my too visible perturbation, and I looked from my window as if the rose-trees in my garden were all that I cared for in the world. :

Just then Nanine brought me a note, left (she said) by a boy, who had not waited for an answer. I knew the writing and gave it to Giudetta, who broke the seal, and running her eye over the paper, quitted the room.

A few minutes elapsed,—hours I thought they were. At length I heard a movement at the door, and a hand placed gently upon the lock. I knew Giudetta's breathing, my heart rose to my lips ; it was a moment of intense excitement ; it seemed as if my future fate hung upon it. But she approached me slowly, her feelings evidently subdued to the tone of calm decision, and began by saying, in a quiet but determined voice, that the note which she had just received, though intended for my perusal, contained many things with which it was not desirable that I should (for the present) be made acquainted. To speak now of what she felt for me, of the deep, devoted, maternal interest

which filled her heart even to overflowing, would, she said, be idle; so without further dwelling on it, she would merely say that for some time past her mind had been much perplexed by fears on my account,—fears now to fully confirmed; and though it was not possible at present to disclose their nature, yet she felt it necessary to tell me that I had seen Mr. Villiers (the name seemed to have fallen from her inadvertently) for the last time. Circumstances, she added, the most imperative, forbade that we should ever meet again; at some future period she might, perhaps, feel herself at liberty to speak more openly, but not now—not now, she repeated with energy; then added in a tremulous and solemn tone, “Thank God, my Antonia, thank God fervently, that by the warning finger of Providence you have been preserved from a fate, compared to which your mother’s wretched one was blessedness.” The solemnity of her manner awed me, my heart trembled; she clasped me in her arms, the fair visions of my fancy vanished; I burst into tears, and she wept with me.

When I could speak, I expressed my entire,

devotion to her will, my perfect confidence in her unbounded affection, and in the course which that affection suggested; laid open my heart, submitted myself to her guidance, and found my bosom lightened of half its load by proving to her, who had been every thing to me, my blindfold confidence in her wisdom, and my deep and self-effacing gratitude.

Giudetta did not conceal from me that the English stranger had expressed his intention of returning to Paris as quickly as circumstances permitted, nor the necessity which this determination imposed upon us of immediately changing our present abode for one where we should be effectually concealed from his pursuit, should he again return to seek us.

Again return! I, at least, could not doubt it. I had never known of falsehood till I had heard the story of my mother's wrongs, and could not, even with her sad image before me, anticipate deceit in one whose eyes were so full of truth. My reasoning was the logic of youth, but I thought it irrefutable. I was in the age of belief; to calculate, and then to mistrust, comes after-

wards. Why it was necessary to fly from him, I could not even conjecture ; but I felt, through the desolation of my heart the grief that smote me when I heard of the sudden and indefinite absence of one on whom my thoughts had dwelt too often and too exclusively, a strong assurance that, whether happy or miserable, we should meet again.

It was not until months had passed away, and that the buds had again opened, and the blossoms ripened into fruit, that my heart began to resign its fond illusions, to whose sweet maintenance it owed the honied food which absence loves to live upon. We were now domesticated in the wing of a dismantled <sup>chateau</sup> chateau in Giudetta's native Dauphine. It had once been a scene of lordly splendor, but the revolution had reduced it almost to ruins ; and when the day went down, bats held their sleepy revels in the roofless saloons and flitted through the broken casements, striking themselves blindly against the gilt and sculptured fragments of former magnificence. But our corner had still a pleasant and habitable air ; after the demolition of the great building, the ancient Concierge had niched himself there with his family ; and occupying

chateau

only two or three chambers, was happy to spare to us, for a moderate remuneration, an airy and agreeable apartment, scantily furnished, but to which, with the aid of books and flowers, and an old harpsichord discovered in a corner, we soon gave an air of habitation and simple comfort.

It was a spot of lonely but engaging aspect. An untamed forest enclosed it on three sides, spreading its shade and mystery far and wide, but breaking down to the south as if to let in a gentle spread of soft home scenery, closed by a mountain-distance blue and indefinite. It was winter when we first became the inhabitants of this remote spot; the woods had lost their leaves, the birds their notes, but the air was soft and aromatic, and we had sometimes whole days of warmth and sunshine, and gorgeous gatherings of bright southern clouds, that when I looked upon their golden architecture, carried my soul back to Italy.

The novelty of our situation charmed me. The perfect stillness of the scene, the absence of all objects but those natural ones that fasten silently on the heart, and of all sounds but such as accorded with the wild and lonely character of a forest country,

far removed from cities and their loud discordance, was to me new and touching; my imagination was affected, and my heart soothed. And when I used to sit, watching the flying lights and shadows as they passed swiftly over the surface of the mountains, or losing myself in their gradual perspective, or listening to the wind as it piped through the branches of the leafless trees, the sorceries of the imagination worked at will; my day-dreams were as the illusions of magic, things long past returned with all the freshness of life upon them, eyes that were closed in death still looked upon me, and a voice came out of its still chamber to speak to me with a mother's love. It was in such dreams that I might be said truly to live; hope always came with them. I had resigned myself to inevitable necessity, as all must who are not rash enough to oppose it; but when hope seemed to throw out its chances, how my heart sprang after them, leaving patience and reason far behind; in those delicious moments, had the present been covered with the hues of paradise, it would have passed it at a bound.

Many months had gone by, and more had

followed them, before I could persuade myself that the English stranger would come no more, that he had forgotten me. For though Giudetta had said that we must never meet again, yet my heart still clung tenaciously, as young hearts will do, to the hope that would not leave it. In vain I repeated to myself the sentence which she had pronounced ; in vain I said, "He is gone for ever !" For ever ! hopeless and dreary words, the tried heart feels all your melancholy force ; but with the young the forever is a week—a day—an hour,—a privation defined and terminable which the mind runs round.

Every noise that broke upon our stillness seemed to announce the approach of the expected ; if a horn sounded in the forest, if the trampling of horses' feet was heard in the distance, if the fall of the wood-cutter's axe sent out its echo, my heart beat ; I looked from the antique casement to the east and to the west, to the north and to the south,—but he came not ! Spring returned and covered the earth with innumerable flowers ; the buds peeped out, the leaves unfolded themselves, the birds carolled on the boughs, the wild deer sprang across the forest glades, snuffing the fresh breath of heaven ; it was

a rich free burst of life and joyfulness,—but yet he came not !

Summer passed away : the sun declined in the heavens, the leaves fell in rustling showers, the days became pale and cheerless, and my heart began to conceive the meaning of that sad for ever ! I then knew—and for the first time—how long, how dreary, how unilluminated was the future ; my soul looked sorrowfully into it, and felt that the perfume of flowers, the morning air, the soft shadows of twilight, the landscape sleeping in the moon-beams, no longer filled my heart with pure and perfect pleasure. The spell was broken, and I slighted the cordial offerings of nature ; for he whom I looked for came not !

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—VIII.—

We were still in the season of winter, and as we sat one wild bleak evening by the flitting blaze of a wood fire, listening to the moaning sound that breathed out of the piled logs as if an imprisoned voice sang mournfully, a strange heedless fancy



crossed my mind. I did not give it time to mature, but suddenly looking towards Giudetta said, with a childish inadvertent earnestness, and a courage that did not naturally belong to my timid character, "Ah, Giudetta! you talk of trees and flowers, and wish for summer that the old oak may again give its shade to our antique seat, but that oak is not like the acacias of our suburb dwelling. Do you remember those acacias? and our rose-trees, and the honeysuckle fence of our little garden? (Giudetta seemed surprised,) and how beautiful it looked when he came the last time, and knocked at the gate? But you did not open it.— Ah, Giudetta, what is the mystery that hangs over him? why must we never meet again? Tell me I conjure you, who is he?"

Giudetta looked wonderingly at me; then pausing for a moment, answered in a slow and solemn voice, "Your brother!"

An instant dizziness came over me; voices rang in my ears, my eyes closed, and when I again opened them, I found myself in bed and my friend kneeling beside me, weeping and upbraiding herself for her cruel (as she called it) and inconsider-

ate disclosure. It was long before I could disentangle the twisted web that was wound round my heart, long before I could separate the mixed thread of my dark and sorrowful thoughts. My first impression was that of horror at my own guilt, my unwitting but heavy guilt; I thought I had sinned beyond redemption, but Giudetta's affectionate reasoning at length reconciled me to myself. After some time I found a solace, and at last a charm, in knowing that I had a brother, though we could never meet again. Friendless—but for my Giudetta—as I was, there was something dear to my heart in the certainty that one being existed with whom I could claim kindred; one to whom I could say that I in some degree belonged.

Giudetta told me, that in the first year of the Lady Almeria's marriage with my father, she had borne him a son. "Of the existence of this son, (she continued,) I do not think your mother ever was aware; nor did I know it until the evening when I first visited the unhappy person by whose death-bed it was my strange lot to watch. That forlorn creature was the Lady Almeria herself, and though her mind was alienated, and she seldom

spoke but to utter wild fearful words of terrifying import, yet I soon discovered from those broken and incoherent mutterings, who and what she was. Her errors had doubtless brought her to the state of utter abandonment in which I found her; many and dreadful were those of which she hourly accused herself, and often would she call upon her son—her Henry, who at one moment she lamented as dead, and the next imagined present with her. She had no relief in her heart,—no hope; and often as I have listened to her awful ravings, have I felt almost assured that she it was who had sat beside your mother as the fountain, and made known to her the misery of the infidel. Her height, her features, the singular color of her hair, which time had not yet changed, all tallied with the description which Atonia had often given me of her fearful companion; and some words which she once uttered in her wanderings, about a poor Venetian woman who had wept and would have prayed with her, seemed to leave little doubt of it. O, if it really was so, what a lesson was there!

“But the awful death-bed—that was the lesson! Heaven preserve me from witnessing such another!

O, the contrast between righteousness and crime ! Your mother's was the death-bed of a saint ; heaven, as she herself said, seemed to open before her, and she fell asleep with the eyes of devoted affection, of watchful tenderness fixed upon her changing features. Her soul broke its mortal cerements in joyful expectation of divine mercy, and went to join the company of angels, for which the purification of sorrow meekly and unrepiningly borne, had fitted her. But Lady Almeria ! those howling agonies, those torments of despair, that heart-hardness that could neither trust or hope,—God preserve us, my Antonia, from the death of the unbeliever ! may our last hour be unlike to hers upon whose dread, yet arrogant despair the iron curtain fell, which has no light behind it. Weak and erring we must be ; but may we never lose our trust in Him, who suffered death for our redemption.

“ When it became my duty to examine the few papers which Lady Almeria had left behind, and which chiefly related to events connected with your mother's story, several intercepted letters from Lord Stanmore to his Antonia fell into my hands.

From these, and especially from one, in which he details the circumstances that led to, and followed his first marriage, aided by other documents, I have been enabled to pursue the thread of those events which I have already related to you. Amongst those papers I found a small case, enclosing the miniature of a boy, whose resemblance to your father testified their close relationship; at the back of the setting was engraved the name of 'Henry Waldgrave Villiers, son of Lord Stanmore and of the Lady Almeria, his wife.' When I returned home and opened the note which you had received in my absence, the initials of H. W. V. startled me; and then I recollected that when I had seen the English stranger at Genoa, his likeness to your father had disturbed my mind, as if there had been an omen of evil in it. It was not a mere resemblance of features, but an air of the head, a sudden turn of expression, such as often identifies members of the same family, but is rarely observed to assimilate those who are strangers in blood. The coincidence of this likeness, with the circumstance of Lord Glenarden's being accompanied when at Venice by a young man, who after-

wards quitted him just about the time when the stranger first appeared at Genoa, confirmed my fears. Under these circumstances, I resolved to prepare your mind for any thing which I might afterwards be obliged to communicate, by disclosing to you the events of your mother's life; at the same time determining to keep (at least for the present) the secret of your brothers's existence, and probable identity with him who appeared to have already created a deeply rooted interest in your heart.

"I requested an interview, in the intention of obtaining such proof as might place the affinity I more than suspected beyond all doubt, but he was gone. I felt disappointed at failing in my purpose, but pleased that by his absence I was spared the necessity of revealing the extent and nature of my fears, —fears fully confirmed by the note which was brought to you on the evening of his departure. Read it, my Antonia, and judge if any further confirmation was necessary :"

"An imperious duty compels me to quit Paris, without allowing me even the feeble consolation of looking once again upon the walls of your

dwelling; within them I have vainly tried to be admitted, but I blame not the maidenly reserve which repels a stranger,—I can admire and respect the feeling from whose effects I suffer. At this moment my nearest relative, he to whom on earth I am most closely bound by every tie of duty as well as by my heart's allegiance, lies on the bed of sickness; I fly to watch over him, and when Heaven has restored him to my prayers, which I trust will soon be, we will return together. Dare I hope that you will then listen to the pleadings of a heart that has but one thought, one wish? that asks but one sole good, one only blessing?—but such a blessing!

“Think me not too presumptuous. Once before you were nearly lost to me for ever, by your sudden change of abode; I tremble to think that circumstances may again cause you to quit the only spot where I have any chance of finding you. Is it too much to ask—to entreat the inestimable favor of a word, a single word from the hand of your respected friend? The slightest indication will suffice to bring me to you to the uttermost part of the earth, and I beseech her to consider

that he who asks this favor, does so with the humblest diffidence, the deeply respectful diffidence of real love, which neither pretends nor arrogates, but only hopes. Were it not for hope, how should I outlive this cruel separation? how endure the desolating uncertainty, the drear monotony of absence? Do not utterly extinguish it; grant me the only boon I dare to ask; think of the intense, the enduring misery into which your loss would plunge me,—grant it, and pardon my presumption, which is, in truth, but the courage of despair.”

On the envelope was written, “A word (be it only addressed to H. W. Villies, under cover to the Earl of Glenarden, Forest Lodge, Hampshire, will reach me wherever I may be.”

Here indeed was confirmation! and my dear friend, shuddering at the precipice on which I stood, and from which the hand of Providence seemed to have withdrawn me, again set forward to seek seclusion in some remote and unvisited spot, carefully obliterating as we journeyed along, all traces by which the direction we had taken could have been discovered.



## —IX.—

The whole mystery was now revealed,—the cruel mystery ! Religion and virtue both forbade my dwelling on the past ; the musing tendency to which I had too fondly given way, could now be no longer indulged in ; I could no longer love my grief, and fondle it as I used to do. Exertion became a duty ; I busied myself in the active occupations of a country life, and found in their cheerful variety a distraction from the morbid broodings of a too tenacious sensibility. Sometimes, when a sigh has risen, or a tear started to my eye, when pressed down by the memory of all that had saddened and discolored the years of my youth, I have felt as if the word forlorn had been made for me ; the image of my dear mother has suddenly crossed my mournful dreams, her gentle spirit has seemed to watch round me, softly chiding my repinings and bidding me think of what she had suffered ; and I blushed at my weakness, and prayed for a better mind.

And my prayers, sincerely and devoutly offered up, were mercifully heard. I again became cheer-

ful, and almost happy ; my garden, my birds, my bees and dairy, amused and occupied me. I was a busy housekeeper, proud of my skill, and pleased to spread the table of my kind Giudetta with luxuries which owed their perfection to my care. I found myself nineteen without knowing how time had passed, or wishing for other enjoyments than those simple ones which my secluded life afforded, or society than that of my most dear Giudetta. But she would sometimes sigh, and call it a pity to see me blooming (it was her fond expression) in the desert, where none would ever come to know and love me ; and then blame herself for throwing her fearful anticipations in the way of my unforeboding cheerfulness. It was too visible that her strength of mind gave way, and that a sad idea, a dread that she should be taken, and I, her orphan care, be left alone in the world, occupied her thoughts, to the exclusion (too often) of more consoling images.

There was a song which I had learned in my childhood of a nun at Genoa. Dear Beatrice ! I have never forgotten your sweet caressing smile, nor the sorrowful expression of your gentle eyes

when you held me on your knee, and taught my infant notes to imitate the clear tones of your celestial voice! She had seen and suffered—poor Beatrice! and the song may have had something to do with her own sorrows, though she used to say it was her sister's story, but she was a nun then; and when I heard the recital of my mother's woes, I used to sing it, for it had some analogy to her sad fate. I can remember it still, that wild and plaintive measure, and these words that went with it:

Her life was made of love,  
Berries, and birds, and flow'rs at first,  
And then the sky above,  
And clouds that golden musings nurst,  
But still with love.

Had it been always so,  
She had been watching now the stream's  
Incessant flow,  
In lone communion with such dreams  
As angels know.

Her gentle hand would still  
Have kindly propp'd the o'er-weigh'd stalk,  
And the free thrill  
Of soaring skylark cheer'd her walk,  
With sweet good will.

But in the grove,  
(Berries, and birds, and flow'rs forgot,)

The sky above,  
And leaves once green that now are not,  
She rests, who was so sweet of thought,  
Laid there by love!

Once, as I sat thrumming on an old guitar, and murmuring the ballad that I loved, Giudetta abruptly interrupted me.

"Do not, dearest Antonia," she said, in a broken and tearful voice, "do not sing that air; it oppresses my heart. Ah, that is your mother's look! Poor child, how unfit art thou to battle with the world,—to be without friend or stay! Antonia, if I should die—"

The thought was awful, and I hurried her away from it, telling her sportively that sooner or later my knight would come, and gravely asking if she had ever either heard or read of peerless lady, whether wedged within the crevice of a rock by a wicked dwarf, or imprisoned in an enchanted castle by a grim giant, who was not in due time released by him to whom fate had given the clue.

"Do you hear that sound?" I exclaimed, as we cowered over the red embers of our half-exhausted fire. "Hark, it comes nearer! As I live, my knight is bewildered in the forest."

"It is a hunter who has lost his way," returned Giudetta; "he sounds his horn to bring the woodcutters to his assistance."

"It is my knight," said I laughingly; "I know the twang of his bugle."

At the same moment, the report of a gun was heard, in an approaching direction. Giudetta quitted the room to place a light in a high window fronting the quarter from which the sounds came, while our old Concierge opened the gate, and stood at it with a blazing fir-branch in his hand, directing its glare upon the most accessible path. Footsteps were now distinctly heard, a moment after a man equipped in the garb of a hunter appeared, preceded by Francois who offered, in the name of his mistress, the hospitality of which the wanderer evidently stood in need.

I sat within the hollow of a screen, that formed a sort of fence around me and threw its shade on my face so as almost to conceal it; but his was distinctly revealed by the flame of a lamp which fell directly on it, bringing out a countenance of no common interest. He was a man apparently of middle age, and of lofty stature; the head of the old Ital-

ian cast, such as Dante might have imagined, or Titian called into life. Every thing about it was peculiar; the hair, though visibly touched with gray, still waved in rich luxuriance over the proud and thoughtful forehead; the eyes were sorrowful and sunken, but with a fitful light in them, that one moment flashed out brightly, and the next was lost in the darkness of habitual gloom. There was perhaps a touch of scorn, or it might be of misanthrophy, in the curve of the finely chiselled lip; but if a smile came, it quickly shifted to an expression of benign and natural courteousness,—and a smile did sometimes come,—but the wear and tear of the heart was visible through it.

There was no mistaking it—no doubting that it was the head of one who had known the bitterness of sorrow and the nothingness of hope; love had been there, and grief, and even despair. All had left traces; but the present bearing was that of a man of noble aspect, the story of whose life was finished, and to whom the present was a form of existence to be endured, not joyed in.

I had ample leisure to contemplate the stranger's figure while he listened to the welcome transferred

by Francois from the lips of Giudetta, who begged that he would excuse her momentary absence, and offered him the shelter of her humble home. It was most thankfully accepted, but with an expression of uneasiness as to the fate of a companion from whom he had been accidentally separated in the intricacies of the forest and Francois departed to send off a trusty guide in the direction which he was supposed to have taken.

I now advanced from within my screen and placing a chair near to the fire, prayed the stranger to be seated. He started at the sound of my voice, and as he looked earnestly at me, I saw a bright flush mount into his cheeks, succeeded by an instant and ashy paleness. He tottered to a chair and dropped into it.

"You are ill, sir, I fear," said I. "How can I assist you?"

He did not answer, but continued to gaze upon me with a steadfast look that became awful, and glazed the blood in my veins; I could not withdraw my eyes from his face, though its expression seemed to grow supernatural. At length he recovered a little; a tinge of life colored his marble

lips ; he made an effort to excuse his agitation. It was a likeness, he said,—a strange, a wonderful likeness, to one whom he had fondly, doatingly loved,—his long-bewailed Antonia. I started.

“ My name, too, is Antonia,” I exclaimed.

“ And your mother ?”

“ Alas ! I have no mother—”

“ But your father ?”

“ He too is dead !”

At this moment Giudetta entered, and not noticing me, advanced to greet her guest ; but the moment her eyes met his, she uttered a loud shriek, and sunk down half fainting on the ground. The object of her terror raised her gently up, and in a sweet re-assuring voice entreated to know the cause of her alarm. “ Perhaps (he said with a melancholy smile) some strange resemblance—such as that young lady bears to—But, good God ! what’s this ? Do my eyes mock me ? No, it is—it is Giudetta !”

There are minutes in life in which an eternity of feelings is condensed, minutes that defy all words—all memory, that can neither be distinctly remembered or described. Such were those which



followed : the dead had come to life, the lost were found ; ties forcibly and cruelly riven were reknit, and fresh affections burst up and blossomed in the barren heart, like springs bubbling in the desert.

It was my father ! What volumes were contained in that single word to the heart of one who believed herself an orphan ! Giudetta stood before him in mute amazement ; she asked no question, but there she stood, as though she feared that even one word of wonder would have destroyed the charmed life, of whose breathing reality she still doubted, even against the evidence of her senses.

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—X.—

My father's first words were of my mother. Words of anguish, of tenderness, of self-upbraiding sorrow, never can I forget ye ! I hung breathlessly on the passionate eloquence of his deep despair, his intense contrition, his almost idolatrous fondness ; and when he pressed me to his widowed heart, and spelt the lines of my agitated features, as if to retrace in their faint and imperfect copy something of the

character of my mother's beauty, I felt as if the benediction of heaven rested on me, and my heart asked no other form of happiness than that which the privilege of sharing and (as I hoped) soothing his sorrows, bestowed upon me.

Giudetta traced a rapid outline of my mother's story, softening the cruel details with the considerate artifices of friendship; and while she told of the trials of her whom she had so faithfully loved, gave, without intending it, the history of her own devoted and unwearied heart. And then my father talked of that happy forest (as he used to call his English solitude) where he had left her in health and loveliness, little thinking that in this world they were to meet no more. "She looked as you do now, Antonia," he said; and then he shuddered as if I too might be lost to him, and felt how much easier it was to fall back from joy to discouragement, than to step out from sorrow into the lightness of joy. And then he explained to us his unfortunate and mysterious absence, (that absence which sealed my mother's fate,) and how it was occasioned by the sudden arrival of Lady Almeria in England, and the intimation which he had received of her hostile intentions.

For a little while he had found in my mother's letters all the comfort of which the languor of absence was susceptible; but at length one came in which she expressed her doubts as to the fidelity of her servant Caterina, whom she seemed to have some reason for supposing in the interest of Lord Glenarden, and entreated him not to write until she had assured him that he could do so with safety. His last letter (she added) had been evidently opened, and others had probably shared the same fate.

"Her apprehensions," continued my father, "appeared to me vague and unfounded; but I knew her sensitive nature, and submitted for a little while to the imposed privation. This letter was (as I have since discovered) a vile trick, but so ingeniously, and delicately fabricated, that I did not then suspect the foul deceit. I endured ten lingering days without hearing any thing more of my Antonia, pining for her dear society, yet unable to disengage myself from the trammels which the bold and persevering claims of Lady Almeria had thrown about me. To remain longer silent was impossible. I wrote, but there came no answer;

I wrote again, and repeatedly,—I dared even to make the long and fatally withheld confession,—dared to lay open the secret of my wretched marriage, and to implore her forgiveness; still not a word. I could no longer endure it,—no longer support a separation, the bitterness of which was unalleviated even by the intercourse of letters. I prepared to leave London immediately; but just as my carriage drove up to the door, my father entered. He affected mystery, and wished to speak with me in private. I dismissed a person who happened to be present, and waited restlessly for his communication.

“How it was made, I have never since recollected. When I again began to feel the sensation, though scarcely the consciousness of existence, I had a confused sense of something horrible weighing me down, but I could not trace it back. I felt all the agonies of despair; but when I tried to remember what had happened, I groped in the dark, I felt like one who in some dreadful dream seems to himself as though he walked alone in the rocking heavens, not knowing where he treads or what surrounds him; darkness above, below,—thick and

enclosing darkness, with now and then a lurid flash lighting it up, and bringing out shapes of horror—hideous and unnatural semblances—that sail by, flapping their heavy wings and uttering shrieks of despair. O misery drear and undefined ! chaos more horrible than the distinctest revelation of torments ! But at last, though by slow degrees, the truth came upon me. I remembered that some one, (I do not think my father said who the person was,) had abruptly told my Antonia of my early marriage ; had told her too, that feeling my affection for Lady Almeria revive, I had favored her views, and shown myself anxious to shake off the Italian woman who had followed me to England ; had made her believe all that was false and execrable ; and that she in her distraction had fled with her child, had been traced to a sea-port, from whence she had embarked for Trieste, and in that Gulph had perished. The ship had gone down in the tremendous hurricane of the 17th of October, in which the Venetian man-of-war, *Il Redentore*, had been lost with all her crew, and not one soul (so went their horrible tale) was saved to tell the doleful story.

“The dreadful revulsion of nature which followed the return of consciousness, reduced me to the brink of the grave, on which I hovered long and doubtfully. While I lay waiting and wishing for death, I dictated a letter to Giuseppe, in whom—villain though he proved—I then placed implicit confidence, requiring a minute detail of every circumstance relative to my heart’s treasure ; and received, too soon, what I believed to be full confirmation of all that had before been so barbarously imposed upon me.”

My father continued to retrace to us his mental agonies and final despair. Years, he said, dragged on drearily ; one white spot alone illuminated the desolate space,—the total overthrow of Lady Almeria’s wicked project, and the public acknowledgment of my dear mother’s honorable marriage.

Lord Glenarden, bitterly disappointed in his designs, scorned by the world, and finding the hope of engaging his son in another alliance totally frustrated, took to a life of profound seclusion. The voice of conscience, which might have been stifled for a time in the turmoil of society, made itself loudly heard in the solitude of the chamber ;

it knelled out its appalling larum, and his shuddering soul sunk into the horrors of anticipated retribution.

His solitary night-walks by the sea-shore, or on the high and trackless mountains ; his lone companionship with the stars, on which he would often gaze for hours, as if he tried to find in their calm aspect the secrets of the future ; his hollow eye and haggard cheek, awakened conjecture. Some talked of deeds foul and deadly, and others lowered their voices, and spoke of unearthly communings and unhallowed visitants.

This state could not long continue. Lord Glendarven's frame wasted rapidly, and death stood in visible identity beside him. Then it was, when the dignities of this world appeared in all their nakedness, that he sent for my father ; and humbling himself before him with the deep contrition of a guilty but awakened spirit, offering up its proud and selfawarding feelings in eager atonement, told him all !—told him how he had himself inflicted the cruel blow, had written the fatal letter which had sent out his young and innocent victim with her helpless child upon an unknown world, and reduced his son

to utter wretchedness ; and having thus disburdened his racked mind of its awful secret, died forgiven by that son whose heart had been blighted by his treachery.

It was not till after many years that my father was undeceived as to the fabricated tale of my mother's death ; he long continued to believe us lost in the hurricane off the Gulph of Trieste. Either Lord Glenarden had been himself duped by some false report of his vile agents, or his memory wandered on his death-bed, and had forgotten all else in the sharp and absorbing remembrance of his own eminent crime, for he did not recur to it.

It was not until early in the same year in which Giudetta and myself quitted Genoa, that my father was led by an accidental circumstance to doubt the certainty of my mother's death. Being in company with some travellers just returned from Italy, he happened to be addressed as Lord Stanmore by some one who was not aware of Lord Glenarden's death, and his consequent change of title. The name appeared to arrest the attention of a person present, a blunt man of rough speech,



who, turning abruptly to my father, said, "You are alive, my lord; therefore it could not have been for you that I once saw bitter tears shed, and by bright eyes, too. It was in Italy—"

"In Italy!" exclaimed my father.

"Yes, at Genoa."

"Good heaven!—when? where?"

"Some few years ago on board the *Friendship*, then lying within the Mola,—I recollect it well,—a lady came on board closely veiled, and engaged berths for herself and friend; the vessel was clearing out for sea, and I was there on the same errand. I remember that she waited for something, and took up an English newspaper to beguile the time; the death of Lord Stanmore was mentioned in it. I shall never forget her shrieks!—those southern women are desperate screamers. It rung in my ear all night; and then, poor soul, she rushed from the deck, and I heard her convulsive sobs as the boat rowed off. I could learn nothing more of her than that she was a stranger unknown at Genoa, who had taken a passage for England for herself, her friend, and a child—"

"But what became of her?" interrupted my father eagerly.

His rough informer saw that he had touched a chord to which the heart of the inquirer responded tremblingly; his voice softened as he replied, "I never could discover. The circumstance interested me, and when I returned to Genoa some months after, I tried many means to obtain information on the subject; but could only learn that the ladies in question had not been seen again, and were supposed to have gone to Venice."

On this imperfect hint my father instantly acted; passed over to Trieste, visited Venice, explored every winding of its most intricate recesses,—every hamlet, almost every hut on the neighboring land, penetrated every where, but could find no trace of her for whom he sought. From thence he wandered into Lombardy, Piedmont, and on to Genoa, meeting always with the same ill success; and was returning to France upon some wild hope which chance held out to him, when descending the Jura at night, his carriage was overturned and he received a severe contusion, which for a time threatened serious consequences.

The effects of this accident detained him for some time in a village at the foot of the mountain;

and there chance brought him in contact with an Italian, who had traversed Europe in the double capacity of courier and contrabandist. This man who, in virtue of his avowed calling, professed garrulity, used to pass my father's window every morning, and always stopped to throw off a few words of light-hearted gossip, and to make good-natured inquiries after his then rapidly improving health.

One day he chanced to speak of Venice. My father listened, for the sound had a charm in it; and Filippo, pleased to have an auditor, began to dole out some long story of his boyish days, when he was a merry page in the household of Count Vicenzio Loredano: my father's attention quickened. Filippo spoke of his young mistress, the Lady Antonia, swearing by Bacchus and Diana that she had not left her like upon the earth. "Ah, my lord, (he exclaimed,) you should have seen her! The Holy Virgin had given her a face, with a heart to match it; but (added he, changing his light tone to one of solemn feeling,) she is gone!—she is a star in heaven!"

"She was shipwrecked," said my father, mastering his strong emotion, and in a tone of inquiry, "in the Gulph of Trieste?"

"Certainly not," said the man, decisively. "She died some three or four years ago in an obscure place, but where I know not. Of her death I am sure, for I had the news of it from the relative of her friend, the Signora Giudetta,—old Bartolo diedo, the learned counsellor, who told it me himself when he lay on his death-bed. It all came (he said) of her marrying a heretic; but she is a saint in heaven, (added Filippo gravely, and touching his cap,) though none have been paid to say masses for her soul."

At this moment a voice called "Filippo!" across the road, and my father was left alone, despoiled of his last hope, and with the wretched certainty that had he earlier discovered the base deception practised on him, he might have saved his Antonia. But he had still a child, and as soon as his strength returned, he sat out once more upon his almost hopeless search.

"And who then," said Giudetta, unable to restrain her vehement anxiety, "who was that Lord Stanmore, of whose death I read?"

A shade passed over my father's face as he answered, "That person was my son,—poor Hen-

ry ! It was the wish of Lord Glenarden that he should live entirely with him, and be as much as possible estranged from me, both in heart and person. Perhaps I was to blame in yielding ; but my adoration for my Antonia, and the fatal mystery—” At this moment a horn sounded, announcing the return of the strayed hunter. “It is my nephew, (said my father,) the son of a dear brother, now no more. My Antonia never knew that brother, — would that she had ! His kind nature and fine sense would have saved us both from ruin ; but smitten with the love of travel and adventure, he had quitted England when a youth, and did not return till after the death of his father.

“He came back the widower of a foreign wife,—an angel he said,—bringing with him this boy ; but he staid not long with us, his spirit soon rejoined that of his wedded love, his gentle Ermelin. With his latest breath he prayed me to protect his son, and never was child dearer to a father’s heart than he is to mine. I bespeak your affection for him, my Antonia, as for a brother ; he has the noble mind, the tender and passionate heart of his father,

—the constant heart. When we sit together on some long evening, I will tell you how fondly, how faithfully he has loved; and all that he has suffered, all that he has resisted, for the sake of a fair Italian girl, who I fear is lost to him for ever. The story will interest you,—but you are pale, you tremble; the emotions of this night have been too much for you. You must retire, my love; and yet, (he added, as he pressed me to his heart,) it is hard to part so soon with my newly discovered treasure.”

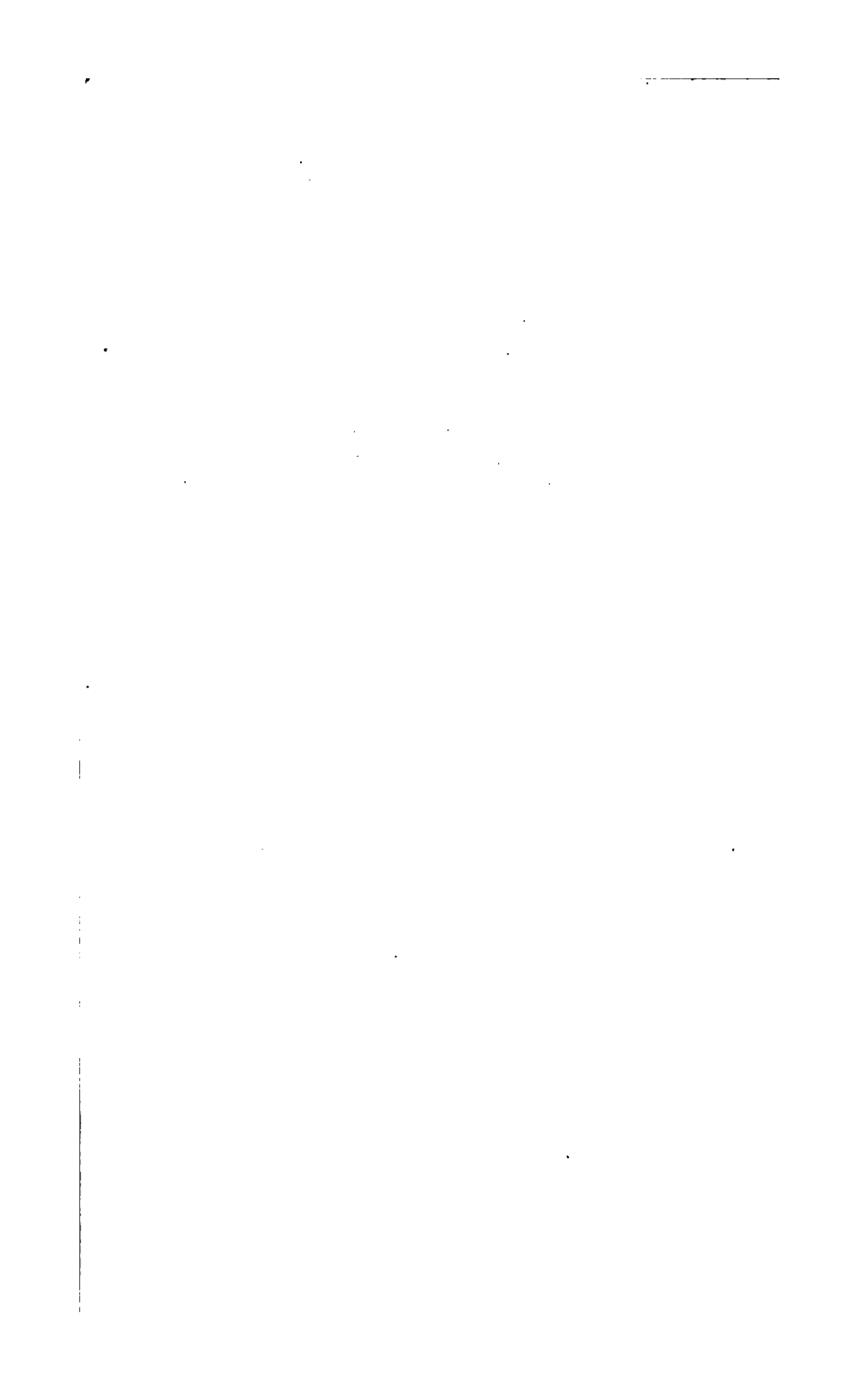
As he uttered these words the door opened. I felt that the decisive moment was come; my cheek glowed, I averted my face, but the first sound! O, how joyfully my heart answered to it! I raised my eyes, caught the never-to-be-forgotten look, and burst into tears.

Then came the joy of recognition, the surprise, the inquiry, the explanation. My father felt, as the light broke in upon him, that a ray of hope, reflected from the happiness of those he loved, might still play on his heart, and I hid my face on dear Giudetta's bosom, blushing to find my playful prophecy fulfilled, and my true knight come at last.

After a day or two of strong excitement, of tears and joy, of wretched and of tender recollections,

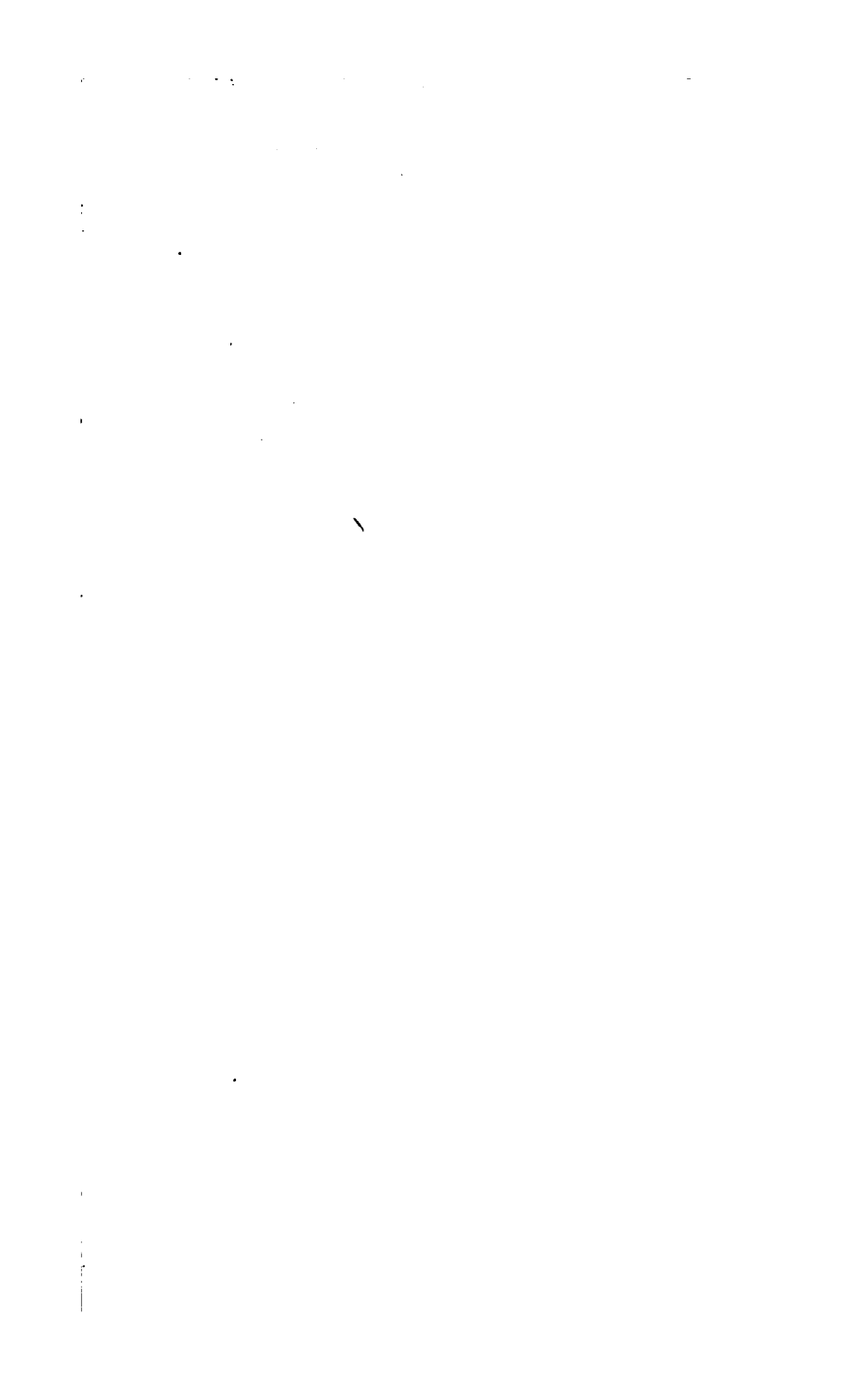
our hearts seemed to settle calmly into happiness. Even my father's habitual melancholy began to assume a less morbid character; it was still the deep and settled grief of memory, the indelible past was always there; but a feeling that promised not happiness, but rest from sorrow, began to mingle with it. Sometimes we sat and talked the sun down; now dwelling on the past, and now on the future, as if life were given us but to gather up the links of memory, and join them to those of hope. What a home for affection and confidence to dwell in was our forest nook! "And what a spot (said my father) to sit and tell old stories in,—such stories as the legend of true love I once promised you, Antonia. It was of an English knight who wooed a fair Italian lady,—O! you have heard the tale, and pitied it, too,—I read it in your eyes; but pity, dear Antonia, is a barren feeling. I claim for my hero a hand with a heart in it:—shall it be so, my love?"

And so it was. And as I sit in my home paradise, with the dear actors in my simple story round me, I look with a proud, fond feeling at my true knight, and bless the holy eve when I knelt before the high altar in the church of Saint Stephen's at Genoa.











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